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THE I.

WILL WATCH

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“CAVENDISH” “THE NAVAL SURGEON”

ETC., ETC.



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WILL WATCH.

CHAPTER L

“——You say that people will call this a novel. Let them ! Am I responsible for all the errors of mankind ? Were such to be the result of my labours, I should be at no loss for a plan.

“The plan for a novel should evidently be a novel plan—what say you ? The only infallible way to do anything well, is to do it carelessly. This you will affirm to be sufficiently novel, and I will affirm to be sufficiently true. I can prove it, and with ease. But no : what is proof, but fact confirming an assertion ?—and who that receives not an assertion willingly, will be thankful for having it forced upon him by the aid of facts ? Can anything be clearer ? Facts—facts !—my dear fellow, one would think that you composed a court-martial. But I beg pardon ; these gentry now-a-days are content with *surmises*.

“Facts ! and do you sneer,” I hear you say, “at facts ? You, whose highest flight has never soared beyond—you whose most prospective dream will scarce embrace to-morrow, whose widest wish is bounded by to-day ! The plodding jog-trot of whose philosophy pursues an easy route, amid enjoyments which sentiment itself could never heighten, nor ambition interrupt—and do you sneer at facts ! What then am I to expect ?”

FACTS — SENTIMENT — AMBITION — EXPECTATION.—Come, come, sir, don’t grow scurrilous. Facts, sir, are facts. As for sentiment—Fiddlestick ! For ambition, I refer you to Mr. Pope ; and touching your expectations, consult your grandmother—that is, her will. If she *should* have left me a legacy —why—ahem ! Don’t forget to mention it—that’s all.

“Expect!” forsooth: have you not read the blessing pronounced on those who “expect little”—than which, alas! no blessing might be more widely earned—than which I fear no blessing is more negligently sought. Expect nothing, therefore, beyond a simple sort of narrative, woven at random during the leisure intervals of more arduous duties; laying claim to no higher interest than such as belongs to brief sketches of my profession, and the history of your humble servant, as far as it includes that of WILL WATCH, since this it is for which you ask me.

Once, when crossing in the passage-boat from Portsmouth to the Isle of Wight, the curiosity of a fellow-passenger interrupted me in a deep reverie—sad and sorrowful enough, Heaven knows! Foreseeing no peace until he should be satisfied, I cleared my voice, clasped my hands, settled myself into a posture indicative of resignation, and said,—

“Sir, my name is Charles Arran; or, if this be not my name at all times, I at least choose that it shall be so now. I am an officer in H. M. Navy, in which I have served for the last * * * years. Though but a young man, I have no relative upon earth for me to care for, or to care for me. I was born in Holyrood House, Edinburgh, in the year 17**; when I shall die, I do not exactly know, but have my suspicions as to this event taking place very shortly. Should the distance permit it, my remains will then be consigned to decay in the final resting-place of my progenitors: thus separated by the space of some two hundred yards from the bed in which the circle of my brief existence was commenced. As for my parentage, sir, my father was Count H——n, colonel of His Majesty’s Foot; while my mother, whom I had the misfortune to lose in infancy, was the daughter of I——, of * * *. There have been neither brothers nor sisters among us for the last three generations—having come down from only son to only son; so you may conclude there are no collateral heirs. I, myself, have no children, and with me expires—but I see, sir, you grow impatient; you would be informed of my more immediate concerns? Good! My present business, then, in the Isle of Wight, is to dine with a gentleman, whose seat is, as you know, not far from Ryde. He has great weight in the Admiralty. I am most anxious to obtain his intercession in behalf of one for whom I am deeply interested; and, as for myself, personally, I am, to sum up, an exceedingly ill-tem-

pered fellow—much at your service—(with a low bow). I am sorry to say that I believe this to be all which I can at present communicate. Should there, however, be any other point on which you would like to be informed, either concerning myself or any other person—whether they are known to me or whether they are not—depend upon it, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to enlighten you. Oh ! by the bye—(putting my hand in my pocket as the boat reached the pier)—I find I have no purse about me ; so you may pay the fare."

The fellow was impertinent, you think ? Nothing of the sort. Pulling forth some coin, with a generosity which might have shamed a duke—say M—rlb—gh for instance—the man smiled as he replied, " with all my heart, sir : a tradesman, I suppose, should think the society of your worship cheap at that."—" Tradesman !—of what trade ?" said I, touched by a *bienveillance du cœur* that—did it depend on me—should never go unrewarded. " Furnishing ironmonger," replied my new arch acquaintance. " I rejoice to hear it ; give me your hand, my friend ; if it be as soft as your heart, it is fit for the clasp of a prince. Here, go on board the * * *, she is just commissioned over the water yonder,—take this card—say I recommended you, and get what orders you can." Before we left Spithead, he had booked upwards of two hundred pounds, which, but for my petulance——

To take up, however, for your information, the history commenced for another—I will not repeat that which you already know. My boyhood—but the boyhood of most men will exhibit a strong similarity where a like degree of attention is paid in the examination ; I need say little, therefore, of that portion of my life which preceded my more immediate entrance on the world. As a lad, I was noted for a love of adventure and my fondness for solitude, in which, like many who have slept their sleep, I delighted to dream of a futurity, that was, perhaps, never to be realised. Dreams which even now the heart will not altogether relinquish, like the idler in Horace :—

" Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis : at ille
Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum."

Left soon after birth to the sole care of my father, he, of course, fills the most prominent part of my recollections of

this period. Might I only fulfil each charge in life as ably and tenderly as his were performed towards me ! Whether I fancy him still busying himself in my education, sharing in my youthful gambols, or indulging me with one of the many traditions concerning the venerable pile above our heads, the same kind yet dignified countenance smiles upon me,—the same martial and graceful form is beside me.

Beneath his eye I reached my fifteenth year ; treated with the indulgence of an equal rather than the discipline of a son, and without ever having experienced the absence of a week.

Some short time before I attained the age above mentioned, my father accepted an invitation to spend my birthday with a few friends assembled at the house of a relative in the county of Lanark. Some transaction occurring to detain him a few days in Edinburgh, I was sent forward by myself on the 10th of December, ten days before the day in question. He was to follow at his earliest convenience. The date to which my narrative now relates, was in the year seventeen hundred and ninety-two. As my father shook my hand through the window of the carriage, and watched my departure from beneath the lowering arch of Holyrood, I felt, when the wave of his hand was last seen, a sensation as novel as it was painful.

Gazing at the dingy walls of the old building beneath which I had passed so many pleasant years, they for the first time seemed to frown on one, the happiest part of whose existence they had witnessed. As we slowly moved along, the chill blast of winter swept round the open space the last sad fragments of the foliage from the adjoining trees, while the banished few whom debt had obliged to take shelter within the respected precincts of the palace, now drew their cloaks more closely around them, and quickening their steps, hastened to finish the exercise which their health demanded.

I knew not what might be the pressure of poverty, but I saw that their cheeks were pinched by the cold evening breeze, that the sky looked murky, and the earth cheerless and repell ing ; so drawing up the blinds, and settling down in the carriage, I took refuge in the arms of one who then had never deserted me—kind Sleep.

The intervening days passed pleasantly ; the evening at length arrived on which my parent was to join our party. We were seated round the fire, an expecting group, when the dash of a horse's feet at full gallop interrupted our conversa-

tion, and, borne on the breeze, betokened the haste of the rider. In a few minutes a note was put into my hand requesting my immediate attendance at the sick bedside of my father. Not a moment was lost in complying with a demand which was so warmly seconded by every feeling within me, and in a brief space I was posting on with all the speed which circumstances permitted.

The clocks of Edinburgh were just tolling out four as my jaded horses drew up within the court-yard of my home. Scarcely did I trust my voice to inquire how the invalid was, until the sad shake of old Donald's, the major domo's, head, gave me to understand that some hope remained, even though it were of the slightest. "How is he, my good Donald; shall I go in to him, or does he sleep?"

"He's just fallen off into a bit nap at present, sir, but I fear me he's in a sair case ony how. Come away, dear Master Charles, maybe he'll wake mending. The Lord be thankit that you're come sae sune!"

A few moments sufficed to learn from Donald an account of his master's illness. He had returned some days since to dinner with wet feet, and, rising from the table, retired immediately to bed. On the following morning he was found to be in a high state of fever, speedily followed by delirium. This had no sooner passed off than he desired me to be summoned.

Heart-struck with the sudden event which threatened to bereave me of my only friend, I stole towards the apartment over whose threshold the angel of death was even then hovering. Well do I remember the chilling gloom of departing grandeur which hung over the old state bed-room. As a child, it had always been an object of reverence mingled with fear, calling up the hundred tales of departed royalty, whose members had successively been born to its honours, and resigned them to clay as fragile as themselves. Each figure in the faded tapestry, and each article of ancient furniture, the brightness of whose gorgeous adornments Time had fretted away,—every object almost on which the eye could rest, contributed its share to the legendary history which, from my earliest infancy, had been communicated to me. How much more impressively, then, did they now recur to my mind, when Grief herself was weighing down a heart, young in the bitter adversities of life, and affec-

tion was striving to believe that their experience was to be delayed—yet a day !

I looked around me, and coming from a blaze of light, my eyes vainly tried to pierce the dim obscurity which the shaded tapers flung over the spacious chamber ;—my heart sunk heavily within me. I paused to catch the low sound that bespoke life near, and which, with the ticking of the time-piece on an adjoining table, filled up the pauses in the storm that howled without.

“ Charles,” said a low voice, faint from pain and previous exertion, and which had failed to gather strength from the broken slumber of the night. In an instant I was by my parent’s side. He grasped my hand, but the cold and feeble pressure left a chill upon my heart. I stooped to press it to my lips. He whispered me, with all his remaining strength, to lie down by his side.

“ I did not think, Charles,” he continued, “ to have parted from you so soon, but if it must be,”—a pause of emotion ensued—“ it will be as well that I should tell you all I have to communicate. I have hitherto forbore to distress your childhood with family details, but you will find a manuscript written for your eye, in the secret drawer of the table beneath the plate-glass opposite.” I interrupted him to express my hopes that his fears unnecessarily darkened the picture. Lifting his hand to his head with much effort, he said languidly, “ I feel”—then turning his face more towards mine, with much difficulty, but with the playful smile of a happier day, continued as he kissed my forehead, “ Charles, my orphan boy let me look upon your face ; so young a —” a whispering succeeded for one or two minutes, as if to himself. I thought he was engaged in prayer, and this idea was confirmed by hearing the words, “ God’s blessing on him !” and “ birthday,” when he was silent.

A short space of time elapsed,—I forbore from delicacy to interrupt him. Absorbed in my own grief, I scarcely noted how the time flew, till aroused by the gradual chilliness of the hand that clasped my own, I looked up—the lips which had so lately pleaded to Heaven in my behalf, Death had rendered mute for ever ! The spirit of my father had flown to its God : there to second, with a parent’s love, his dying supplication for an only child.

The poignancy of my anguish I leave to the imagination of those who, in the purity of their youth, have lost some beloved object to which their hearts were clinging—clinging with all the untainted fervour that glows in the heart of childhood : its affections as yet only to be won by kindness, and its counsels still unswayed by that sordid interest, to which the world will shortly give so loud a voice.

It was not the first day of grief and bitterness which revealed to me the extent of my loss : still, as I pondered over the event which I strove in vain to disbelieve, some new remembrance of his virtues and affection, arose to redouble my tears. But much as the genius of man may suggest, and his art effect, the grave cannot be deluded of its prey. The day arrived when the remains of my last—first—sole friend were to be consigned to the tomb. The time which had elapsed since his death, old Donald told me, was a week, but for me, affliction had so bewildered every sense, that the sun shining into the apartment, and the sky betokening a change of weather, were the all that seemed to give the lie to its being the very morning of his decease.

Soon was the sad drama to close ! Indulging me with a last glance at the features I had venerated from my cradle, I beheld the final offices performed which excluded him from all that savoured of humanity—except its ashes.

When I beheld his form lifted from the couch of death, and found myself alone, a feeling of incredulity stole over me, I could not persuade myself of what I had seen ; nay, more sceptical than the disbeliever of old, I could not believe even that which I had too deeply felt.

His had been a history both sad and strange, and something told me mine was doomed to be its parallel. Beneath that very canopy he had been born. After a life spent in various climes, marked by adventure, and shaded by misfortune, destiny had required the surrender of that life she had first given to him on the same spot. Born on the same couch, what guarantee had I that the same unrelenting fortune was not to dog my steps ?

His virtues, his abilities, his acquirements, his vast and varied funds of knowledge, to the accumulations of which he had continued adding almost to his closing hour—his accomplishments, alas, where were they now ? Could so rich a store be decreed only to a lavish expenditure upon the heart-

less tomb ? Why was he not allowed to bequeath even a portion of them—a sumptuous legacy—to the desolate orphan he had left behind ?

Might no kinder fate be permitted to them than that of descending, with their regretted possessor, to the gloomy halls of death—where the rest of his race were slumbering before him ? Alas, thought I, could the valour and the might, the wisdom and the experience, of those of the line who had gone before me be restored for the benefit of an unworthy descendant, what might not be mine ?

“ It’s vera true, dear Master Charles,” sobbed a voice, in sorrowful reply, at my elbow. “ It’s e’en owre true—an ye had a’ thaе ye’d be richer yet than the feckless ne’er-do-well—gude guide him—wha’s got the dukedom. The grave winna be cheated, Master Charles, fleech it as ye will. Ye canna take their valour, and their might, and their wisdom, and their experience ; but ye hae mair than maist—ye hae their blude, Master Charles, and ye hae their example—and gin ye but haud your head up, and put a stout heart to a stey brae, and no greet sae sairly, ye’ll may-be yet—yet—”

Good old Donald’s grief would let him say no more. The faithful follower of his master’s wanderings—he wept like a child. He had, unknown to me, been lingering near and checked the sad thoughts which I had unconsciously uttered aloud. His own emotions now compelled him to silence for a few seconds, when, somewhat recovered, he said, “ Will ye no gang and see the last of your dear father, sir, in the chapel yonder ? They finished prayers, sir, when I came in. Ye suldna hae come away yoursel’, and you chief mourner, too ! I’ll no be surprised if they’re waiting. Come, Master Charles,”—and the kind old creature exerted himself to see that I did what was expected.

Short indeed, in all instances, is the passage from the halls of the living to the mansions of the dead ; but, in this instance, we had but to cross the court-yard to enter the royal chapel, and there relinquish to decay the only relative—save a distant cousin—that I then possessed on earth. With streaming eyes, I beheld the object of my grief slowly disappear into the chasm that yawned below it. I marked the gilded mockery glistening through my tears, from amid the gloom of the vault, as it reflected back the torchlight, used to place it in its final niche. It moved slowly from my sight, and passed

away for ever ! Count H——n was numbered with the dead. The pomp, the pageantry, the hum, the flutter of life, were in motion around me—but the wilds of Arabia would have been a social relief.

Days had elapsed, and I found myself meditating in the room so lately tenanted. A listlessness of soul had come over me, which rendered all things indifferent. Reflecting on the last moments of my father, the mention of some manuscript written for my perusal, was recalled to me. It was a last mournful treat, and I drew it from the secret drawer which he had mentioned as the place of its concealment. With an eager eye I read as follows :—

“ MY DEAR CHARLES,

“ Warned by a precarious state of health, and the probability of your forlorn desolation, should I not be spared to rear you to maturity, I am anxious to forearm you against the evil day, and insure to you such indispensable information of your history as your present tender age forbids my communicating to you in person. It is a melancholy foresight, and one which I may trust in God will prove unnecessary ; still, should we be doomed to separate before I can prove in you the young and delightful friend which I have ever fondly anticipated for my declining years, I cannot but reflect that no maternal arms can shield you from the blasts of adversity : no faithful and devoted tongue afford you the advice which youth so invariably needs,—but that, on the contrary, even the few and distant connections then remaining to you, will be those whose deepest interests are wrapped up in your non-existence !

“ To supply to you, therefore, an informant whose truth you can never doubt, to afford to you a monitor whose disinterested advice you can never suspect, and one on whose consistency of counsel passing events can make no impression, I bequeath to you these sheets with my most sacred charge that you preserve and consult them through life as your most sacred friends. My reasons, my dear boy, for such a charge, will be made evident in your perusal of them.

“ Of the various subjects to which these papers relate, I have purposely kept you in ignorance ; and when I tell you that your age is at this present date of my writing but ten years, you will thank me for the kindness. Long, long may you be spared so mournful a knowledge. My first care is to

inform you of your ancestors. Your name, my dear boy, will already have told you that you are descended from the family of H——n ; a name which must ever remain one of the brightest ornaments of Scottish history, until valour, genius, and unflinching faith are disregarded by the country so long celebrated for these virtues. I shall not here trouble either you or myself by going back to the origin of your ancestors,—that you already know. Beginning with a more modern date, it will suffice to say that the first duke of your family was James, son of James, Marquis of H——n, by Lady Anne C——m, daughter of the Earl of Gl——rn. He was long distinguished by the favour of his sovereign, Charles the First, who promoted him to the dukedom ; but on the immolation of that royal martyr by a misguided people, his devoted zeal doomed him to be the next noble victim to the insolent tyranny of the regicides. Duke James was succeeded in his title and career by his brother, Duke William, who, after having proved the chief support of his royal master, Charles the Second, fell, mortally wounded, at the battle of Worcester. The honours of the family then devolved on his niece, Lady Anne, eldest daughter of his late brother Duke James ; and more peaceful times having happily succeeded, Duchess Anne married William, Earl of S——k, son of the Marquis of D——s, on whom, at her grace's request, the title was conferred during life.

“ Eleven children were the issue of this marriage, the eldest of whom, James, Earl of A——n, was my grandfather. Inheriting such powerful claims on his sovereign's gratitude, we are not surprised at finding him in the full enjoyment of the second Charles's favour. On the decease of this monarch he attached himself to James, his successor, who honoured him with the appointment of envoy extraordinary to the court of France, gave him the command of the royal regiment of horse, made him one of the Knights of the Thistle, upon reviving this noble order, and appointed him master of his wardrobe.

“ Such being the distinctions and caresses bestowed upon this earl, during King James's short and stormy reign, he was justly considered as a staunch supporter of that prince's measures, and even unfairly accused of having embraced Popery at the king's persuasion.

“ This circumstance created and afterwards fed an unhappy feud between Lord A——n and his father, the Duke of H——n. False to the faith of the family whose title he

only bore by courtesy, this nobleman had espoused political interests diametrically opposite to those of his son, who had early entered into the measure of inviting over the Prince of Orange. So powerfully did the duke exert himself to fix this potentate on the throne, that he was chosen President of the Convention of the Scottish estates, who voted the prince King, and was by them invested with the dictatorial power of seizing and imprisoning all suspected persons.

“ Lord A—r—n, on the contrary, was by gratitude and loyalty so strongly attached to the person of James the Second, that, without abetting his religious principles, he steadfastly adhered to him in the midst of all his troubles ; he sedulously, though in vain, endeavoured to restrain the defection of his party ; he marched with him to Salisbury ; he attended him in his flights, and remained constantly with him, until he finally embarked.

“ When he waited at length on the Prince of Orange, the excuse which he pleaded for being the last who paid his respects, was, ‘ that the duty which he owed to his absent master would not permit him sooner to have this honour.’

“ At the ensuing meeting of the Scottish Lords and gentlemen, held in London, although the president was his father, whose devotion to the Prince of Orange was avowed, yet Lord A—r—n, in a bold and animated speech, opposed the motion for addressing the Prince to take upon himself the government of Scotland ; and moved, ‘ that his Highness be solicited to invite his Majesty to return and call a free parliament, for securing our religion and liberties, according to the known laws of the realm.’

“ He, however, failed in this amendment, by which he only drew upon himself the resentment of William, who soon after deprived him of the command of the regiment, and, with the concurrence of the Duke of H—n, had him committed to the Tower.

“ He now underwent a long and painful imprisonment, during which his friends were debarred of all access to him ; he was even prevented from corresponding with any one, and for many months denied the benefit of the *habeas corpus* act, whose operation lay suspended. He was at length liberated, upon giving security for his conduct and appearance ; but thereafter looked upon with a suspicious eye. His steps, his words, nay his very looks, were narrowly watched ; an attempt was even made upon his life, by four armed ruffians,

who in the night attacked him in Pall Mall, but, with the help of his trusty attendants, he repelled their assault and put them to flight.*

“ A coincidence in sentiments and disposition had long linked Lord A—r—n in close intimacy with the Duke of Gr—ft—n, to whose good offices he stood principally indebted for his late enlargement. He had before been struck with the unfolding charms of his friend’s youngest sister, Lady Barbara; he was now captivated by their maturer power. His visits at Cl—v—l—nd House thence became more frequent and lasted much longer. This circumstance had not escaped the vigilant observation of the spies, by whom he was surrounded, and who were ordered to redouble their assiduity and strive to discover the true source of the earl’s partiality to that mansion. It was in consequence soon after given out, that Lord A—r—n, who had lost his countess, the daughter of the Earl of Su—d—l—nd, had been privately married to Lady Barbara F—tzr—y, whom the slightest breath of slander could in no wise impugn, but who was said to have been brought up a papist.

“ This report, which no pains were taken to contradict, awakened the resentment of the Duke of H—n, whose dislike of the Romish religion had ever been unconquerable. It no less incensed the Queen, on whom the executive government had devolved, during the King’s journey to Holland, and it was a second time resolved to send Lord A—r—n to the Tower, upon the plea of his being concerned in Lord Preston’s conspiracy. Meanwhile Cl—v—l—nd House was searched, and *his papers*, in the possession of Lady Barbara, were seized as treasonous.

“ In the agonies into which this lady had been thrown by the proceedings against her lord, she had been delivered of a son,† whom his grandmother, the Duchess of Cl—v—l—nd, with the consent of his uncle, the Duke, had named Charles.

“ Neither the birth of this son, nor the pangs of his distracted mother, had any influence to soothe the Duke of H—n and reconcile him to this alliance. He even refused to listen to any overtures for averting the earl’s threatened trial, and consenting to his liberation, save upon the express

* Lord A—r—n had strong reasons to suspect Lord M—rlb—gh to have plotted this assassination, from his well-known inveteracy.

† The 30th of March, 1691.

condition, that Lady Barbara should retire to a convent upon the Continent, and separate for ever from his son.

“ After the most excruciating conflict, this exemplary and devoted wife made the required sacrifice. Mustering what strength her nearly exhausted state left her, she tore herself from her infant son, whom the duchess, her mother, undertook to rear up, and withdrew to the Abbey of Pontoise, near St. Germain, where lingering illness by degrees undermined her delicate frame, and very soon terminated her sufferings death.

‘ Lord A—r—n, frantic with grief and vexation, disdainfully resisted all applications for entering into a fresh security for his future conduct, and even positively refused to pass his word not to hold any communication with the Court of St. Germain’s. He was however tied down to the terms subscribed the year before by himself, the Duke of Gr—ft—n and Lord F—v—rsh—m, by which he was bound to appear whenever required, and restricted to reside in Scotland under the penalty himself of £10,000, and his two securities of £5,000 each. These preliminaries adjusted, it was notified to him upon his coming out of the Tower, that twenty-four hours only were allowed him to remain in London.

“ Having employed this short interval principally about his infant child, whom the fostering care of the Duchess of Cl—v—l—nd was rearing up at Chiswick, he set off for Scotland and fixed his residence at Thinniel, where he dragged on a painful existence until the death of his father, whose titles, however, he could not assume for three years, when, with much difficulty, a patent was at length obtained to confirm the surrender made in his favour by the Duchess Anne, in whom the honours of the house vested as heiress general.

“ Having formed a new and wealthy alliance with the Hon. Miss Elizabeth G—r—rd, daughter of Lord G—r—rd, of Bromley, he found it expedient to send his son over to France, and to entrust his person and education to the Earl of M—dd—t—n, at that time secretary of state to James the Second.

“ This nobleman received his young charge with every demonstration of joy, placed him in his family, under the same masters who had brought up his own sons, and in process of time reposed in him a large share of his confidence. The Court of St. Germain’s were, moreover, not a little gratified by the possession of this youth, whom they considered as a

certain pledge of the duke's attachment to their cause, and whom the late great sufferings and splendid virtues of his mother entitled to additional regard.

“ Great was the weight and influence, which now, towards the close of Queen Anne's reign, the Duke of H——n enjoyed, both at home and abroad. He had been created Duke of Br——n, and, after the Union, appointed master-general of the Ordnance. In addition to the order of the Thistle, conferred upon him by James the Second, his royal mistress had honoured him with that of the Garter; and he was daily expected in France as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary from Her Majesty to that Court, to conclude the treaty of the peace of Utrecht; but before he could set out upon the embassy, he was cruelly deprived of his life in Hyde Park, on the 15th of November, 1712.

“ The shock felt by the son at the news of this horrid catastrophe, which robbed him of so dear a father, may be more easily conceived than described. Instead of experiencing the heartfelt joy of being pressed in the embraces of a fond and indulgent parent, whom he had the most powerful motives to love and to venerate; instead of beholding him caressed by crowned heads, and courted by multitudes, in the plenitude of power, and in the enjoyment of full health and vigour, he learnt suddenly, and unprepared for the woeful event, that this great and amiable nobleman had been treacherously murdered in a duel with Lord M——h——n.

“ In a situation requiring all the fortitude of stoicism, and the experience of advanced years, was this poor orphan left to encounter the frowns of adversity, without support and in a foreign land, at the age of one-and-twenty.

“ Thus destined, as it were, by fate to suffer, we see that your grandfather, my venerated parent, became, from his birth, the innocent object of a rancorous persecution. Doomed never to behold his exemplary mother, who, to rescue her lord, had, in the bloom of youth, heroically sacrificed herself, he had been, at about five years of age, removed from Ch——w——k to H——n, where, for a time, he experienced many parental endearments, and was much caressed by the Duchess Anne.

“ Upon his father taking the title of Duke of H——n, he received the appellation of Lord A——r——n; and, although his mother's marriage had never been formally announced, yet he was universally known to be the son and heir of the duke.

The latter, after long grieving for his beloved Barbara, was, at length, as we have seen, induced to espouse another lady.

“ This union yielded not, at first, the complete felicity which it had promised. The duke was too soon made sensible that his domestic peace could no otherwise be insured than by the absence of his son. He therefore consigned the care of his education to the care of his particular friend, Lord M—dd—t—n.

No cloud, for some years, shaded my father’s high prospects. In two successive births, the duchess only presented her lord with daughters. She was at length delivered of a son, who was called Marquess of Cl—d—sd—le, a title for the first time borne by any of the family.

“ Problematical as his succession to an undisputed title now appeared, still, as the eldest son, possessing a title far more ancient than that of his half brother’s, and holding the duke’s affection undiminished, my father’s hopes remained in full vigour; they had even, of late, acquired additional strength, when, as you have read, they were at once clouded, through the atrocious assassination of his parent, in 1712.

“ With grief and rage conflicting in his breast, my father flew to Antwerp in pursuit of the Duke of M—rlb—r—gh, originally the principal author of his parent’s separation, and, latterly, the dark contriver and instigator of this foul murder, in consequence of which he had been compelled to absent himself from his country. Upon this great offender appearing in the midst of a large circle, composed of the most conspicuous persons in the city, he resolutely made up to him, upbraided him with this enormous deed, and, in a thundering tone of voice, demanded at his hands immediate satisfaction. Appalled at the charge, the conscious criminal, in sullen silence, forsook the circle, nor thereafter, for six weeks, quitted his own apartments, until the Earl of A—r—n, despairing of a chance to fight him, had embarked for England, to take possession of his titles and estates.

“ On his arrival, he found, to his consternation, that while he was seeking to avenge the death of his parent, his absence had, to his prejudice, been too successfully improved by his step-mother, the dowager duchess. By this interested and unrelenting enemy, every existing trace of his mother’s marriage had been either carefully effaced or removed, and he himself was too bitterly taught to feel, that in this lady he was

to prove his most powerful and determined foe ; nay, the more effectually to work his ruin, he discovered that she was even combining with the friends of the Duke of M—rlb—r—gh, to whom she owed the murder of her husband. One crowning misfortune remained to annihilate all his hopes,—the substance of his maternal grandmother, the Duchess of Cl—l—nd, had been dissipated by a profligate husband ; and thus baffled and persecuted, he had no resource left but in Prince Charles, with whom he had been brought up, and to whom he went for protection.

“ In 1715 he repaired a second time to England, with a secret commission to the prince’s friends, particularly entrusted to him by the Duke of Ormond and Lord Bolingbroke. To avoid detection, he would not take charge of any written documents ; but being blessed, like you, with an excellent memory, he learnt by heart the different dispatches intended to be committed to his care, and faithfully delivered their contents to Lord Lansdowne, to whom he was sent.

“ Fortunate for him did it prove that he had taken this wise precaution ; for scarcely had he reached London, when it appeared that Bolingbroke, hackneyed in treachery, had, through the regent of France, betrayed the secrets of the prince his master, and unravelled the whole mystery of the very mission. My father was, in consequence, arrested, his baggage searched, and himself examined by Mr. Walpole, who, after some detention, liberated him, with the strict injunction immediately to leave England, and if he valued his own head, never more to set his foot in the dominions.

“ After a succession of unimportant events, in the year 1737 my father married Antoinetta Courtney, of Archambaud, my mother ; a lady of high descent, and disposition assimilated to his own, but more rich in birth, in mental and personal endowments, than in other possessions. With her he was urged by some friends to pay a visit to the possessor of his title, the Duke of H——n, whom he had before met at Rome, and who, in the genuine effusions of brotherly love, had expressed wishes to see him in Scotland, and intimated a readiness to make him amends for his sufferings. Whether this visit was ill-timed, or the Duke had since imbibed impressions of distrust, cold civilities were the only fruits reaped from this step. Of a spirit ill-adapted to brook neglect, he would not long have protracted his stay, had not my mother’s situation rendered it

ineligible to expose her in a passage across the sea. He therefore remained at Holyrood, where she gave birth to me, a circumstance which tended to increase my uncle's—his brother's uneasiness. So soon as her health and mine permitted it, he embarked with us for the Continent, and retired to Archambaud, a small seat on the river Dou, between Neufchatel and St. Hippolite, where the constant and uniform attentions of Lord Marischall, and some other British exiles, proved to his death the only alleviations made to his hard fate.

“ Thus far, my dear boy, I have thought fit to prepare you for encountering the storms of life. Some years must naturally elapse before your understanding be sufficiently ripened to peruse these sheets. Whenever you do, take care you be not inflated with vanity at the contemplation of your descent. To you, so far from affording cause for exultation, it, on the contrary, points out the absolute necessity of arming yourself well with manly resignation. Let the consciousness of what you are, operate only as a powerful incitement to excel others in intrinsic worth ; and be you well assured that no human greatness is secure, unless it be seated in the soul, and beyond the reach of sublunary contingencies. Through your veins runs a noble stream, clear and undefiled ; nay, I deem it the purer from its struggles with adversity. Above all things, I charge you carefully to preserve it free from the least contamination. On your countenance are palpably delineated the characteristic features of your ancestors. These must and will announce you, if, with them, in every point your conduct accord. Nature has endowed you with fine parts, which I am improving with unremitting assiduity ; it particularly behoves you to apply them to the acquisition of an honourable independence, a situation which, alas ! I have been able, but inadequately, I fear, to secure to you.

“ For this much, however, I may well be thankful. My will, which is deposited with these papers, secures to you, however slenderly, the maintenance of your rank as a gentleman, un scared by that frightful apparition—whose materiality too many are, alas ! doomed to feel—Want. I could have wished you more, but will not regret that my wishes may not, in my day, be realized ; for it has ever been, and I trust ever will be, my aim to teach you, that it is not by the gifts of Fortune that happiness can be secured to man. No, the nearest approach to this feeling is reserved for a heart warmed by the sacred

fires of humanity,—a soul sufficiently great to endure, without shrinking, the ordeal to which its Creator has ordained it, and feel content in the blessings which rewards its trials. This, my poor boy, is the whole philosophy of life, and much, I fear, will you need its support.

“ Do not look for happiness : Heaven never intended to bestow it upon earth ; if you attain contentment, you will be rich indeed. I trust you have been reared with every honourable principle, based upon religion. From these never deviate, as you value the love of a departed friend. Early learn to withstand the fancied force of ridicule ; it is generally the weapon of Vice wielded in a weak cause to overcome Folly. In such cases, despise the attack, and scorn the assailant. Be slow to form friendships, and your attachments will be sincere. Let the principles of your acquaintance be your first care. These, deduced from their actions, or, failing their actions, from those sentiments which you have actually ascertained to be their *true* opinions,—these, I say, will ever give you an unerring insight into their character. Whenever, therefore, you meet a man whose principles you know to be wrong, shun him—he is a walking moral pestilence. But this, I doubt not, you will be unable to believe, until you have too bitterly experienced its truth. Yet, even at the prospect of this, we should not grieve ; youth exists to-day as yesterday ; too lavish of the heart’s bright coin—confidence, it will not accept the experience which it has not bought. Therefore, under every misfortune, however severe, you may thus be consoled ; you have forearmed yourself against the disasters of a future day, which, but for this, might have proved worse even than the present.

“ These few hints I fling out for your future guidance in the world, not to daunt that eager spirit which I have hitherto marked with such delight, but rather that I may enable you to direct its energies with greater vigour, and, by pointing out the obstacles impeding the path of all, facilitate their evasion by yourself,—alas, if Heaven would but spare me in consideration of my many sorrows, to see the day—but I feel—I feel this cannot be ! I shall soon be taken from you. You, my dear Charles, will rush upon the arenas of the world, eager to taste its pleasures, to bask in its precarious sunshine, and to pluck its worthless honours. Merciful Father ! to think that my orphan will be left without *one friend* ! God be his

guide in such a perilous strife. How awful, at such a moment, to reflect that the sins of the father are to be visited on the children! My dear boy, with all my faults I loved you,—the grave will divide us ere you read this, but some kind affections of your heart will remain to cheer my dreams, even in that dark abode! Poor child, I kissed you, sleeping in your little couch, before I sat down to this sad midnight task—but these thoughts are agonizing. When the period I now contemplate arrives, your only surviving relative—if he outlives me, and his is a younger life—will be your cousin Douglas, now holding the title to which you are the rightful heir. Whether it will ever come to you, must be left in other hands, though I much fear that Duke James' papers were too surely destroyed or concealed, to leave any very strong hopes of verifying Lady Barbara's marriage.

“This much, however, is in your favour. The Duke regards you with considerable affection. He has no children, save a natural daughter, and is most unlikely, from his gay habits of living, ever to marry—even if his life should be spared beyond the noon of manhood, which I doubt. In many conversations on a subject so near to my heart as your welfare, he has expressed himself most kindly towards you, and has even gone so far as to propose a union between you and his child; in which case, his means are of course pledged to secure to you the legal enjoyment of your title and estates. On this point, you are yet far too young for me to say much. No worldly interests shall ever induce me, hovering on the brink of the grave, to influence your taking a step so irrevocably decisive of your future happiness or misery as marriage. Yet, if on your attaining proper years, such a choice is still open to you, and the lady's attractions are such as will warrant your expecting your future welfare in such a union, I, for my part, shall not have the slightest objection; her birth, the only disputable point, not being, in my view, a sufficient obstacle to counterbalance the numerous advantages of such an alliance. I am far, however, from thinking that such a marriage will ever take place—even though suggested by her father; for I fear I have too well judged his character, when I say that with all his noble and redeeming points, but a very slight reliance can be placed on the unstable determinations of so wavering a mind: I have, therefore, been contented with making him pledge himself to me in a most solemn promise, that while he lives he will never lose sight of you,

but continue to exert his interest for your benefit to the utmost. Remember, therefore, when we are suddenly severed, that it is on him alone you have any claim ; though I much fear, that even in this, you will find him more apt to fail than to fulfil.

“ If your age, therefore, be very young at this sad crisis—which, however painful, it is my duty to contemplate—do not be the first to bring up the topic of this marriage, but wait, and see what may be your cousin’s plans respecting you. If these would still make you his son-in-law, your own feelings will decide your conduct. If, on the contrary, however—and alas, even this is possible !—he should forget his promises to me and not seem to interest himself warmly in your favour, cease to hope anything from him, for what he does for you will be done on the instant. In this case, then, lose no time in hanging on, but take immediate steps for entering into a profession. His Majesty’s service presents to you the only choice.—For diplomacy, should the Duke not exert himself in your favour, you will not have sufficient interest ; besides, you may be left too young. My own profession, that of the army, I am compelled to confess, throws its debutants among scenes and men, but too apt to demoralise the noblest feelings of the heart. Take, then, the navy ; I have had years of familiar intercourse with both services, and give it, in this case, a decided preference,—not for the rewards which it offers, or the comforts which it bestows ; in both these points it is miserably inferior ; but I recommend it, my dear Charles, to your choice, from the effects it produces on the character. A military life, it is true, confers a polish on its votaries, which we rarely see a naval officer possess, while the unlimited command to which the latter has been accustomed, too often gives to his manner a domineering tone.—The advantages of the former are not unfrequently dearly balanced by a hollow-hearted insincerity and dearth of estimable feeling, but the hardships of a seaman’s bearing masks a sterling heart—I would rather that you should risk the blemish of the sailor’s errors, than the contamination of the soldier’s vices. It is with this one that I would rather mix, but it is the other that I would rather be.

“ Contemplating this alternative, you will find with these papers a correspondence with my old friend Admiral Fluke. By this you will perceive that the time for entering the navy is in general at twelve years old ; anxious, however, to continue

your education as long as life is spared to me, I have been enabled, through the admiral's kindness, to get your name borne on the books of one of the harbour ships at Portsmouth, since the date of your attaining that age. This time, should you be obliged to enter the navy, will always count to you, while nothing will be easier than to abandon the idea at pleasure.

“Admiral Fluke served as a junior officer under your maternal uncle, who bade fair to gain a distinguished rank in the naval service, but just as he was about to grasp his well-earned flag, fate decreed his fall,—full of honours, it is true, but under circumstances not a little mysterious, and melancholy indeed.—You will find Admiral Fluke, if he be living, whimsical in his habits, but possessing a heart which God has stored with all that is generous in sentiment, and noble in deed. He will, I am sure, most cheerfully do all that is necessary to serve you in the navy, and assist your advancement to the last.—I bequeath to him the most precious gift I have to leave—your filial love.—Remember it is all that you can proffer to him, in return for the kindnesses which I feel he will be delighted to heap upon you.—Above all things, reverence his advice ; no man can afford you better.

“With these papers you will find the patent, granted to your grandfather, by which I hold my title. As, however, it is of French origin and tenure, I think you will find it operate against you when in the English navy, and for this reason, added to the comparatively straitened circumstances in which I am obliged to leave you, take my advice, and forbear assuming it, until you have at least gained some rank in your profession. Towards your doing this, you will find that I have gradually paved the way, not only by the retired life I have latterly led, but by forgetting whenever it was practicable that so useless an appendage belonged to my name. Should you enter the navy, let it be with a firm determination to rise in it. This is a sure path to success in any line of life. To this end never forget the lesson I have unceasingly impressed upon you—that your first moral duty is to act the part of a gentleman—a man of honour. To insure your rise, and win the esteem of your brother officers, it is then only necessary that you invariably obey your orders with alacrity ; that you show your zeal for the service, in your attachment to its duties, and your affection to your superiors ; of whom, should your opinion at

any time be unfavourable, never divulge it, until it is imperative on you so to do.

“Never break your leave, or ever utter that which you would be unwilling to commit to paper. Strenuously avoid a character for being quarrelsome. Always oblige your brother officers and shipmates when in your power. Submit cheerfully at first to the ordeals which all junior officers must undergo; but a fair noviciate being past, never suffer any individual to play the bully, nor even permit the slightest imputation to be cast upon your courage or your honour. Do but follow these rules, my dear Charles, and you cannot fail to advance with credit to the service and with pleasure to yourself: remembering above all things what I have said about the ridicule of your companions. On no account, I repeat, allow yourself to be laughed out of that which is right. It is the most cowardly act of which you can be guilty, as well as the most foolish; since, whatever thorns may beset the path of rectitude, those which surround error are multiplied ten thousand times.

“Bear in mind that I can have no motive in tendering this advice, but anxiety for your welfare. These views are founded upon my past knowledge of human nature; and I here bequeath to you the solemn testimony of one who reviews former follies with the most keen remorse, that had I, at my onset in life, possessed such a guide as these sheets ought to prove to you, I should not on my death-bed have been compelled to leave so slender a provision for a beloved and orphan son.

“The day on which I date this is the centenary of my excellent father’s birth; after whom you and I are called. This name was given him by the Duchess of Cl—v—l—nd, in remembrance of his ancestor Charles the Second. A hundred years have already revolved over our misfortunes. May they find a period in you, and may the Almighty Disposer of events, to whose special protection I most devoutly commend you, crown your days with felicity!

“With these ardent vows, I shall to the last moment be,

“My dear Charles,

“Your tender and affectionate parent,

“CHARLES H—N.

“Holyrood, March 30, 1791.”

What were my feelings on finishing the perusal of this touching manuscript? I leave the answer to the heart of

him who shall read these mournful pages when I too may be gathered to the dust. Amid a variety of sensations my mind was overwhelmed,—so tender—so noble—so beloved ! Was this the parent I had lost ? So resigned under the most bitter strokes of misfortune—so careful of his high integrity, amid the manifold and strong temptations of struggling humanity—so watchful of the interests which Nature had committed to his charge. Was this beautiful example for ever shaded from my eyes ? So devoted and single in his sentiments—so chivalrous and humane in his feelings, with a mind so varied and extensive in its knowledge—so accomplished and pleasing in his person, as I had known him to be, was this the gifted being whom society could no longer count among its members ? I know not what the faults might have been which he so earnestly deplored, but to his virtues I had been the constant witness, of his attractions I had felt the full charm. And were all these losses to fall redoubled upon me ? Did these precious, yet inestimable sheets comprise everything that the tomb had spared ? Were they to prove to me the sole relict of him who hitherto had been all ? Were these to compose my sole chart along the bounded but sorrowful and perilous waste of life ? Was there to be no relative with whom to share my joys and allay my woes, nearer than this sad testimony of a departed parent's love ? Was my soul to know no dearer friend than this ?

Alas ! I was indeed an orphan ! One answer sufficed for all these harrowing questions—“Even so !”

These papers might, I thought, to a certain degree soothe my sorrows, excite my emulation, restrain my exultation, if such were ever in store for me ; they might also prove a useful guide through life : but could they watch over my sickness or support the sadness of a dying bed ? No—no—no : I was left—I was alone. The world was before me and busy life teeming around me, but I —

I was alone !

CHAPTER II.

BUT I have to enter on my life ; I will not pause too long on this sad threshold—left as I was, so friendless, so young a creature, and one at whom Fate seemed determined to shoot her arrows for amusement, I cannot say that my misfortunes did not in some degree create their antidote. It is true they crushed, at a blow, the exuberant joy of youth which my boyhood had hitherto displayed, but at the same time they forced me to think much and deeply of every step I took ; they contributed sooner than anything else could have done, to suppress the natural carelessness and folly of my age, and supply in their place a prudence that enabled me to avail myself with a singular rapidity, not only of whatever capacities I was endowed with by nature, but also of the artificial advantages with which my father's unremitting assiduity had provided me in my education.

It was, however, some time before I could at all bring my mind to the task of considering what was before me—that I had to enter on the world and carve my own fortunes as best I might. It was indeed the labour of a giant, imposed upon a pygmy. At length, however, I summoned courage to write to my father's friend, Admiral Fluke, and after acquainting him with the lamented occasion of my intruding myself upon his notice, I mentioned the advice which my parent had left me, the anxious desire I had of following to the utmost the slightest wishes of so dear a friend, and concluded by saying, that if he could secure my continuance in the navy, as my father had pointed out, he would very much oblige me. In as short a time as the distance permitted, I was delighted with the receipt of the following letter :—

“Fluke's Folly, near Portsmouth,
“January, 1793.

“MY DEAR YOUNKER,

“Your dispatch of the twentieth date, was received here the day before yesterday, and glad as I am to do a good turn to an old friend, I had not thought that my poor services would ever have been called for by so sorrowful an occasion. To an old fellow like me, so often hulled, and now laid up in ordinary for so long past, every bell for an old messmate is a warning

to be ready to slip my own moorings, to say nothing of what I feel at losing so dear a friend as your father.

“ But for you, my boy, you’re going to be one of us ; the first thing for you, therefore, is to do your duty ; and that, as I take it, my lad, is to cheer up, and, as you say, do your father’s will in all matters touching which you may have any clear orders, which I know he was too old a soldier and good an officer not to leave behind for ye. As for your being shipped, my boy, Phil Fluke has too many friends to find any difficulty in so slight a matter as that, were it not, as it is, managed all already to your hand ; so get all your traps in stowage ; heave overboard all your lumber, make your poor father’s orderly—old Donald—put ye into snug sailing trim, and then get ye here under all canvas as fast as you can, where you shall find a good mess, a spare hammock, and a right warm berth, in the heart of yours, ever faithfully to command,

“ PHILIP FLUKE,
“ Admiral of the White,
“ &c., &c., &c.

“ For the hands of Count H——n,
“ Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh.”

“ P.S. You won’t feel hurt, my dear boy, at my saying that you are doing me a kindness by using my name at your banker’s, and so on, for any sum ye would like. Your father’s purse was mine before my own, so ye see you have as much right to the thing as if mine was yours. Any little nick-nack of the Count’s you can spare I should like to have,—I didn’t think this was in store for my sad old heart ; but ‘tis God’s will, boy ! My eyes have long been past doing duty in the writing way, and my secretary, Corporal Royal, is so deaf that I must say no more at present than God’s benison to ye, lad ! and make your number here as soon as ye can ; you have lost a good father, and I have long wanted a son.”

The above warm-hearted epistle was the first true comfort that I had received from human being since my father’s death, excepting always poor old Donald’s attentions, which were unceasing. He, however, had ever been about me the same kind bustling old being, whose loss I had never known, and whose true value was therefore unable to estimate. In writing to Admiral Fluke, I had not, it is true, from my ignorance of the

world, expected an evasion of the request I had made to him ; but still my forlorn situation had a degree of seeming nature about it, which rendered the kind conclusion of his postscript most affecting. I at once conceived him to be, what, in truth, he was—a veteran whom a thousand fights had spared to be the delight of his friends, and the ornament of his profession.

At the same time, thought I, there must be something very funny about him. “Fluke’s Folly!” Can this be the name of his villa? Very odd for a man to adopt one that seems to carry with it a censure of its owner. Again, the execrable calligraphy of his secretary, Corporal Royal, the freedom of the address, “Dear Younker,” seemed to correspond somewhat strangely with the ceremonious precision of the superscription. However, I have often heard my father remark on the peculiarity of character which so strongly marks the naval profession generally, and the admiral in particular. These are but the proofs of his correctness.

On communicating the letter to Donald, he expressed himself in raptures one moment, and in despair the next ; now he was dazzled by the splendid prospect which he affirmed to be laid open to me in my new profession, now he was in tears at the inevitable separation “from his young laird—his dear bairn.”

The first violence of his emotions having subsided, we laid our heads together as to what ought to be my next step, when we mutually agreed that the only duty which remained for me to execute in Scotland was to wait on my only relative and proposed father-in-law, the Duke of H——n, and submit the steps which I had taken for his approval.

Strange mixture that he was of every accomplishment that could dazzle, and every folly that could detach ! Of the most generous heart, and the most careless friendship !—pledged as he was to my father, and professing of his friendship as he had ever been to me, I did think that he might have taken some further interest in the fortunes of his young kinsman, the intended husband of his child and heir of his titles : but alas ! this was not to be the only lesson that was to instruct me how soon the follies of dissipation can efface the duties and kindnesses of life. His servants had often called to inquire for my health, and say how happy their master would be to see me at H——n, but he never came himself ; and after the day when he, as second of kin, had lowered my

father to his last repose, in that vault which was next to be opened for himself, I never saw him until in the midst of the gaieties of his beautiful seat I waited on him to take my leave.

Melancholy, indeed, were the reflections that then thronged upon me. I felt the tears rush into my eyes, and a choking sensation arose in my bosom as if my heart could no longer contain its sorrows, but was about to break.

It was from here that I had been summoned to receive my father's dying kiss. It was in these halls that my grandfather had been brought up to expect that the princely estates connected with them would one day be his own ; it was from here that he was banished by the artful jealousy of a stepmother to insure the happiness of a beloved parent ; and it is from here, thought I, as through a window I beheld the duke, surrounded by his gay companions, advancing to give me the interview—it is from here, where so many fond and futile dreams have been cherished, so many happy hours have been passed, so many dear associations still linger around me, that I must depart, a solitary wanderer, to seek my hapless fortune on the world ! My spirit seemed to shrink within herself, and again there came over me that overwhelming presentiment of an evil destiny which first assailed me by the deserted death-bed of my father.

Turning rapidly from the prospect that called up such sombre phantasies, my eyes rested on the portrait of the ancestor whose assassination had proved the precursor of all our misfortunes. From his death each sire had produced but a single son, to fall successively beneath the iron wand of our persecuting fate, and I alone survived to bar the usurped claim of him who was squandering in profusion the revenues of the lands to which I, the true heir, was to become a stranger.

“ Ah, Charles, my boy!—what, art come at last ? A Scot's true welcome to you ! ” interrupted the light tones of the duke, as he entered the room. “ We'll do our best to cheer ye up,” he added, with all the natural kindness of his manner, as he shook me warmly by the hand and slapped my shoulder ; “ and faith, poor heart, but you've had a sad time of it ! ”

“ Yes, your grace,” I replied, as soon as the emotions struggling within me allowed me to speak, “ I have come, but it is to take my leave.”

“Tout, man, hold your tongue—where should you be going ? Take leave ! I’ll not hear of such a thing. Kenneth !” playfully putting his hand before my mouth to prevent my replying, while he gave his orders to his favourite servant, “put Count H——n into his old quarters, and set him on his pony ; or stay—she’s been bled. Well, take him down to the stables, and when he has chosen his beast, bring him on to me at the hill.” Then, addressing himself to me, “We’re going to take a ride ; you must come and get a merrier mood among us. So—here’s Kenneth to tell you all about it, as I am pressed for time,” and before I could recover from my surprise, or arrest his departure, he turned and left me to the care of the domestic he had named.

At this warm reception I own brighter thoughts did spring up in my bosom, and as I changed my dress, I said to myself, “So, then, he will not allow me to be banished from a country and a scene so dear to me. My father has wronged him in the estimate of his character. I, too, have been equally guilty : I, into whose amusements he has so often entered with so much alacrity—I should have known him better.” Thus cheered by the brightening of my prospects, I rode out with a lighter heart than I had known for many a day ; proposing to myself, on my road, to write once more to Admiral Fluke, and inform him, with many thanks, of the change in my destiny. “That, however, I will delay a few days, until Douglas speaks as to what are his future intentions respecting me ; still,” thought I, “as he will, doubtless, wish me to travel, I shall make a point some day of seeing the kind old officer who was so ready to help me in my distress.”

Day after day passed, some idle nothing always occurring to take up the attention of my kinsman, when he was not engaged in his sacrifices to the gods of Sleep or Wine. Still I had no reason to complain of an outward want of kindness, but beyond his usual *bonhomie*, and the free salutations of the day, I frequently had no opportunity of any intercourse with him, while a consideration of my youth, and a feeling of reserve, withheld me from at all thrusting myself on his notice.

This action, on a mind naturally proud and sensitive, could not long continue, and I at last seized a favourable moment of speaking to him alone. This occurred one morning after

breakfast, when I found him by accident in the library, very busy caressing three fine spaniels, which were fawning on him with all the affection of their race.

“ Well, Charles, my boy ! what mischief are ye bent on to-day ? I hope ye take care of yourself here ; ye should know how by this time, for we make no stranger of ye, cousin —eh, man ?”

“ Why, truly, your grace——”

“ Tout, Charley, ye may forget the grace between us—they christened me Douglas.”

“ Well, then, Douglas, it was on this very subject that I wished to speak to you. My father’s wishes, as they appear from his papers, were, that I should on his demise adopt the navy as a profession, through the interest of his friend, Admiral Fluke, the promise of whose services I have already received. I wished, however, to consult you before I took any final step.”

“ What, dog, Charley ?” rubbing his spaniel’s ears ; “ so you wish to see the world, eh, coz ? What, Fan !”—addressing this latter speech to his canine friend, “ how sore you’ve made your feet, poor little bitch !” playfully pressing his lips to the animal’s face ; “ you shall have them soaked in bran and water. Hey there, Kenneth !” calling to his servant, whose voice he heard, as the library-door was open. “ I faith, Charles, my boy, I commend your spirit !”—speaking once more to me, while he rose up, snapping his fingers to the dogs, at whose gambols he was looking—“ Nothing like seeing the world—Hey, Kenneth !—here, Fan, poor little bitch !—So, if I can be of any service to you, Charley—a murrain on that fellow, Kenneth !—Kenneth !”—I heard his voice die along the echoing passages, intermingled with the fifty tones of the different menials, who repeated their lord’s call, while, with flying feet, they hastened to obey his summons.

— Looking around the room, I found myself the only tenant, and as the scene which had passed conveyed its lesson to my mind, I sank upon the nearest chair, and wept in silence. My father, you were right ! This is a sad, an early, but a bitter proof that your estimate of human nature has been but too truly founded on experience. This is no more a home for me. I will take leave of my careless relative and depart.—Generous old sailor ! How different has been the conduct of the kinsman and the friend !

That day I neither rode nor walked, beyond the immediate vicinity of the house, whose noble pile reminded me of an observation of my parent, which pointed out more strongly than could any other reflection have done, the uselessness of regret.

“In a few years,” said he, as we last drove from these walls together, “the busy beings around us will have crumbled to dust, and those chambers will be mouldering into a similar decay—strangers will wander over their ruins, and muse on the greatness of other men, and former times, as I and many more have done in the villa of Mæcenas; but alas!” he exclaimed, with a melancholy tone, “whose fame among the numerous race that have trodden these halls—whose fame shall consecrate the pile?”

I thought I still heard his voice, as looking from the carriage-window this pensive thought escaped him, and while the emulating flame of youthful hope burned bright within my breast, a voice from the bottom of my soul forbade me ever to think that it should be mine.—Which was it to be?

It was now but too evident that nothing was to be expected from an idle dependance on the Duke. I had been trained up to rely more on my own exertions than on aught beside, and pride strongly seconded those feelings which had been instilled into me. My title, said I, with a bitter pang, is too good to need my recourse to any dishonourable means of establishing it, and if Heaven designs to restore me to my rights, it will not refuse my own honest exertion as the human means: but if the misfortunes of my fathers are to be extended to me, such a course of conduct will, at least, afford me one consolation, the sense of having done my duty will reconcile me to a scanty, but upright independence.

Let me at least be grateful, I concluded, that I have one true friend preserved to me; he is too brave, too long inured to the world, to change.

With a composed mind, I returned to dress for dinner, but the Duke had not returned. This, however, being no rarity, it excited little notice. Many of the guests were connections, as well as myself, and all being of the lordly sex, they seemed at no loss to account for his absence.

At noon, the next day, I determined to wait no longer for his appearance, but took my leave in a letter, which I left for him, and in which I explained all that was necessary, and gave

him my address at the old Admiral's; I then set off for Edinburgh, where everything was prepared for my departure for England.

The conveyance which I had chosen was the mail, for the English capital; but this was overruled by old Donald, who insisted that I "could na' think of going by onything but a Leith smack to London, for three reasons:—first, there could na' be a doubt it would be the most reasonable—secondly, the young laird would see it was like the beginning his profession at ance—and thirdly, aboon a' was it not the Admiral's very orders to be getting to him under all canvas?" This was conclusive; it was the last time, perhaps, that I could ever show a deference to the faithful old man's advice. I allowed him to secure my passage, and on the third morning after my return to Holyrood, I took a final ramble over its tenantless old chambers, and then entered the chapel, to pay my sad adieus to my father's tomb.

I looked in vain for some little fragment which was loose, to bring away, and remind me in a foreign land of all that I had left dear in this. I found not what I sought. Mine should not be the hand to mutilate the slightest portion of his sepulchre, and I was about to depart, when the early sunbeam, which played sweetly on the marble home of the dead, made me linger with a pleasing, but not unholy sorrow.

So peacefully sleeping in your last couch!—Ah, if I only shared your repose, the many griefs to which I am wandering would be spared me!

A beautiful weed, growing among the interstices of the tomb, here met my eye. I picked it, and placing this frail emblem and memento of the dead in my pocket-book I left the chapel.

Nature, at least, thought I, does not forget to ornament the grave of him whose soul she had so richly endowed. Are the same kind offices in store for me? and when and where will they be performed? My father! your mourners have been few, but will not mine be less? With these sad thoughts, I drove from the court-yard, and hastened to commit my clouded fortunes to the deep.

CHAPTER III.

A NEW era now commences in my life. Hitherto it had been one of thought and feeling, and as such I have written it. From henceforth it was to be one of actions and of deeds. If I have lingered over the first, is it not natural that the first emotions of the mind should possess a charm, which subsequent events cannot lessen or efface?

Donald, having seen me and all my baggage in safety on board the smack, shook hands with me repeatedly, until the vessel was about to depart, when he quitted her decks, rubbing his eyes with the back of his hand, and looking those adieus he could no longer be heard to utter.

My grief I did not attempt to conceal, and through my tears I beheld my old instructor and drill sergeant in all my martial exercises walk pensively down to the end of the little wooden pier, and there await our passing, when he waved his hat, and continued to do so, with a slower motion, until the distance rendered so small an object indistinct.

Poor Donald! It was true that to his eyes the “ample page” had never been unrolled, or he would have known how truly his feelings had been described by the Scythian exile:—

“ Ut te non poteram, poteram tua vela videre;
 Vela diu vultus detinuere meos.
 At postquam nec te, nec vela fugacia vidi;
 Et quod spectarem, nil, nisi pontus, erat.”

The wind was strong and cold, but I protracted my stay on deck until the last moment, willing to gaze on my native shores as long as fate would permit.

Having left Inch Keith upon our lee, and passed the Bass upon our weather bow, the light began to fail, and as the outline of the land became each moment less distinct, the dreariness of my lot seemed more and more to unfold upon me; I coveted even the wild homes of the rabbits I had so often hunted; and envied the sea-fowl their tempestuous eyrie on the Bass, since, whatever might be the danger which threatened their lives, they at least seem to be spared the feelings of an exile, and blessed with a freedom that instinct alone controlled. Even the distant ruins of Tantallon Castle, the gloomy hold of my stern old ancestor, scoured then a home to me.

Turning, however, from these mournful feelings, I endeavoured to comfort myself by reflecting that I had taken a decisive step; that I left everything settled behind me. The remains of my father's property, of which I had not thought fit to dispose, were entrusted to the care of his agent, with secret instructions to Donald to keep a good look-out on them: since agents, we know, are occasionally troubled with a peculiar phantasm of the mind, which, making them believe themselves principals instead of secondary personages, induces them to part with the property of others as though it were their own; this, to say the least, is awkward—particularly when the acquiring parties are obliged to refund.

My income, small as it was, was secure, and, for my profession, sufficient; and the thought of this pleased me by the momentary installation of an honest pride; for though wealth might endeavour to annoy me, by comparing its display with my poverty, still my bosom would never know the pangs which want must feel, when forced to supplicate the assistance of those more highly favoured. "These," thank Heaven, "are indeed blessings!" and sitting myself down on the signal-swivels, I laid my face on the cold gun, to counteract the effects produced by the motion of the ship.

In a few minutes I fell asleep, and was roused by the steward, who announced dinner. This I felt unable to touch, but as a thin sleet had begun to fall, I desired they would show me to my cabin, where, notwithstanding its apparent misery, I was glad to lie down.

It was on the evening of the second day that the steward again came to wake me, inquiring if I would not like some supper, for since my arrival on board I had taken little or no sustenance. Feeling very hungry, therefore, and free from the distressing nausea that had before oppressed me, I accepted the offer very readily, and desiring them to get me what they could, I entered the passengers' cabin.

"I tell you what, sir, I tell you what it is," reiterated the captain, in his loudest tones, while arguing with one of the passengers, who, beside the captain and myself, was the only tenant of the cabin, "you may talk as you like of your freedom, and all those fine names, that mean nothing at all, and call the correction of the masters and overseers brutal barbarity, but I tell you there's no peasantry in the world half so well off as the black population of the West India colonies.

What do they want? Haven't they plenty to eat; haven't they clothes to their back, and roofs, ay, and good roofs, for their heads? What would ye have for them? How many of our countrymen in poor auld Scotland haven't these comforts! Why don't you look at home before you think of mending the condition of those who ask ye for nothing."

"Well, but captain," returned the passenger, who seemed to be an Englishman, "do you mean to tell me they are properly treated?"

"Treated? ay, that are they," returned the Scotch captain, whose language appeared to be wonderfully free from both the idiom and accent of the land to which he professed to belong; "what should prevent their being treated properly?"

"Why, the simple fact of the baseness of human nature, if nothing else. I say nothing about individual cases of kind masters occurring, that will always be found under the worst circumstances, but take it on the broad sure principle. Take the tendency of man's disposition in general into account; when did you ever hear that, in an unequal state, the weak and defenceless were not the victims of oppression?"

"Oh, as to that, if you philosophize on the matter, I've done. All I stand up for is the fact; and as to human nature, let every man speak as he finds it. I have nothing to complain of, God knows; I always wish to lend a helping hand wherever I can; and I give others the credit of doing the same by me. I find no fault with human nature; it's good enough for me—but perhaps you cut another man's sails by your own masts."

The gentleman to whom this was addressed, seemed rather nettled at the remark, and quickly replied by saying, "Well, captain, you seem so positive on the subject, I began to think that you must know somewhat more of the colonies than you give us reason to suppose. Have you ever——"

"Coming, coming!" suddenly bawled the captain, starting up and running on deck to meet the person whom it would seem he had heard calling him. The passenger who was thus left alone nodded his head, as if to himself, and went on with his supper.

Well, thought I, that last seems to be a very fair sentiment of the captain's, he must be a good-hearted man; it seems to be a poor argument against any particular condition of things, to state by the reasoning of philosophy, on the temperament

of man, that it ought to be bad. My neighbour here on my right, so busily engaged in devouring his supper, must surely be some disappointed fellow, to run down human nature so harshly. Though I hate the system of slavery in the West Indies, which, I suppose, they were discussing, I think many better arguments might be adduced for its suppression than the mere theory of human nature,—that slavery and justice cannot exist together. It surely must be envy which prompts people to run down humanity, and I think better of the captain for defending it. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;” it must be his own goodness of disposition which prompts him to think well of others.

With these thoughts I finished my meal before me, and determining to shun the society of the maligning passenger, and seek that of the kind-hearted captain, I returned upon deck.

The wind having shifted round to the north-west quarter, I found we were going what they called free, and at a speed which to me seemed delightful. I had often before this been on the sea for four-and-twenty hours together, so that the feelings usually attendant on a first voyage were considerably lessened. By the advice of the captain, I had taken a wine-glassful of brandy, and this, while it seemed to charm my cares away, dissipated every unpleasant sensation that remained.

Most people would have thought themselves very fortunate in thus conquering an enemy so much dreaded, but alas, bitterly had I to regret my conquest!

But not to forestall. The night being extremely fine, and the breeze from that invigorating quarter which makes the heart pulsate with a joy as inexplicable as it is indescribable, I paced the deck as steadily as I could, revolving the sad destinies which had so long clouded my own particular branch of our house, and painting in fairy hues the vista which now seemed open to my young and boundless, but honourable ambition.

One by one the passengers retired below to their berths, until the seaman at the wheel, the mate of the watch, the captain and myself, were left alone upon the quarter deck. The third named personage coming up to me as I leaned over the vessel's bulwark to windward, began to remark on the fineness of the night, and entered at once into conversation. Some allusion to the argument which had passed below, induced him to re-enter on the subject of colonial slavery, and after many enco-

miums on the natural and inherent goodness of the human heart, he proceeded to describe to me in glowing terms the manner in which slaves were treated, their christenings, and weddings, at which he assured me the owners were always present, at the former particularly, where they generally stood sponsors. Again and again he declared their condition to be infinitely preferable to that of our own peasantry ; that emancipation—only thought of by madmen—would prove their ruin and destruction, and assuring me that the slaves themselves were averse to such an interruption of their present happiness, he then modestly touched on the kind feelings of his own heart and love of seeing everything “ fair and square,” and concluded by informing me that he had ever been guided by his favourite motto, which was—“ Honesty is the best policy.”

“ And so you’ll find it, sir,” added he, “ take a blunt sea-man’s word for it. However, as it’s but cold work talking up here, and getting late, suppose we go below. I’ve some capital arrack on board ; perhaps you’ve never tasted it, sir, and would like to take a drop ?”

“ Yes ? Ay, I thought you would ; well, we’ll just take one small glass and then turn in.”

Finding in my heart no disinclination to comply with the captain’s kind request, we returned together to the passenger’s cabin. Here we found that every one had retired to rest ; the captain, however, called up the steward, and making him set the necessary ingredients on the table, my kind friend permitted him to return to his hammock, and proceeded to brew for me a glass of arrack punch.

Though I have never been able to bring myself to taste that beverage since, yet I well remember—as though it were a matter of yesterday’s date—the sweet, novel, and I then thought delicious, flavour of this drink. The first social glass was only half drained when my soul seemed to expand towards the being who assailed my heart with unexpected kindness.

“ Well, sir,” said the captain, observing the high esteem in which I held both his punch and himself, “ you think this is good, eh ? Glad you like it ! Happy to have it in my power to place it before ye. However, let me drink your health in it ; here’s success to ye, wherever ye go, though you are somewhat young to be leaving your country—however, maybe you’re going to your parents ?”

"No, indeed," I replied with a sigh, my mirth suddenly checked by this allusion, "would that I were! but alas, I have no parents to whom to go, though I may indeed say that they are gone before me."

"I beg your pardon, sir, I am sure, with all my heart; there's nothing I thought of less, than bringing such a sad chance to mind. I respect your sorrows, sir, young as you are. Ay, sir, I can share them too, for I was left without father or mother nor little more than eleven years old and three months. Ay, sir, I was indeed. But God be thanked, He didn't desert me. So I went aboard a whaler, and after that from one ship to another till I tumbled on my feet where I am now, and a snug berth I've got of it, and I hope I'm thankful; but this I will say for myself, though maybe I ought not to say so, my motto's always been 'Honesty's the best policy,' and if you want to get on in this life, sir, that's the road."

"You're right, indeed," said I, my heart glowing at the expression of sentiments which touched, as it were, all the hidden sympathies of my own bosom.

"How strange that our conditions on first starting should have been so similar!" I continued to myself; then aloud, "I myself am about to commence a nautical life, though not exactly in a whaler, and if the rank of life be somewhat different, the loneliness of the one is nearly equal to that of the other."

"Sorry to hear it, sir, very sorry; but if it is so, all the grief in the world will not mend it. There's nothing like depending on one's own exertions, and I only wish your success may be equal to mine. Though I dare say, as you remark, the rank of life betwixt us at starting is different enough—not that I wish to pry, sir, into your affairs, by no means."

Eager to rebut this seemingly inferred charge of suspecting one so friendly, I assured him that I had nothing to conceal, and as he filled my glass for the second time, I mentioned the circumstances of my recent loss, my being without any relative nearer than a distant cousin, and consequent determination to go to sea. As I proceeded in my narrative, he seemed deeply interested in it, and several times drew the back of his rough hand across his face as if to brush away the tears which my recital had drawn forth.

"A hard case, sir, a hard case indeed, young sir!" said he, in a sorrowful accent; "but I fear that you're farther off yet

from your port than you imagine ; for unless this Admiral is a better-hearted sort of fellow than many of his cloth, you'll find it more difficult to get afloat perhaps than you think. However, bear up withal, sir. I was once worse off than you, and got a helping hand when I least expected it, and I hope I'm thankful for it, and as I was done by, so I ought to do, and so, sir, I was going to say, hoping you'll pardon my boldness, that perhaps as you may find more difficulties in your way than you think of, if the loan of a few pounds—Heaven knows I haven't many to offer, and maybe am taking a liberty in offering these—but still it may—”

“ Thank you, captain,” I hastily interposed, my heart leaping into my mouth, and my voice thick with emotion, “ thank you, with all my heart, but I am already provided with a sufficiency, for I have in my purse seventy-three pounds odd, and—”

“ Seventy-three pounds,” said he, in an altered tone, and with a look which I did not quite comprehend, “ that is a larger sum than I could think of offering. I hope you take care of it, for in a ship there are always many thieves.”

“ Are there, indeed ? I must be on my guard, then ; but still I suppose it is safe about my person ? here—see in this pocket.”

“ Why, ay, it may be pretty safe there, I dare say—let me see ! I couldn't get at my desk.”

“ Thank you,” I suddenly replied, intuitively shrinking, I know not why, from the idea of parting with my purse.

“ Well ! ” he quickly resumed, unheeding the want of trust I had displayed, “ since I cannot take charge of it you must manage to shift for yourself, and keep a sharp eye on it, for afloat the scoundrels would steal one's eyes were they good for anything, and the lids not closed. However, I must turn in. 'Tis a sad tale yours, young sir, it makes my heart ache when I think of it ; come, one more glass ? ”

“ No, I thank you.”

“ Well, then, half a one. Come, here's better luck still, and if I could do anything to serve ye 'twould do me good to do it.”

The captain now lighted me to my berth, and the unusual quantity of stimulus I had taken making me feel excessively sleepy, I soon forgot my cares. Before I slept, however, I remember some singular thoughts to have crossed my mind.

There was a peculiar expression of the captain's face which I could neither understand nor banish, and which accorded as ill with his motto as did his inadvertently-dropped suspicions of Admiral Fluke and the sea-thieves, with his expatiation on the inherent virtues of mankind.

Early in the morning, so early that the merest glimmer of light was visible in my berth, I felt some one shaking me by the arm. My first act was to place my hand upon my purse, which I had carefully secreted. That being secure, I turned my head, and beheld a figure, whose voice proclaimed it to be the captain.

“Mr. Arran—Mr. Arran!”

“Is that you, captain?”

“Yes, sir, I'm just come down to say that there's a capital chance for you,” speaking in a low voice.

“Why, what's the matter?”

“Why, you're going on to Portsmouth, are you not?”

“Yes, that is my ultimate destination; but what of it?”

“Why, this—but speak low, sir, for there's a friend of the owner's on board, and I don't wish him to know that I've let a passenger slip through my hands—if you're going to Portsmouth, this is your best opportunity, for there's a devilish snug craft alongside, bound straight on for Spithead—we fell in with her this morning; and finding that an old friend of mine is the commander, I went on board—you'll excuse my boldness—but I once had to fight my own way in the world, with nothing but an honest heart to recommend me—so I thought if I could do you a good turn, I shouldn't hurt myself, and 'twould be all the better for both of us. I asked the captain, therefore, if, as a friend of mine, he would just set ye down at the sally-port, Portsmouth, passage-free, and he's told me to say, that if you'll share his mess, he'll be happy to have you for auld lang syne.”

“What! then, he's a countryman too, is he? Oh, I'll be delighted to get to my journey's end without any further trouble!” I replied, jumping out of my berth with such haste, that I struck my knee severely against the bed-place.

“Gently, gently sir; you'll be wakening that cursed prying rascal in the next cabin. Do you bear a hand, and rig yourself, and I'll return upon deck and get your luggage into the boat, ready for a start.”

Transported with the charming kindness of my new friend.

a very few minutes sufficed for me to array myself, and make my way as quietly as I could to the quarter-deck. Here, through the haze of a winter's day-break, I beheld, what appeared to me, a large three-masted ship. Her hull was high, and wholly black, and as she lay with her main top-sail aback,—she scarcely seemed to contain a living soul.

“Ah, you’re the lad to get on in the world, sir,” said the captain, coming up to me; “I see that a sharp eye and a quick hand, they send a man forward; they only require an honest heart, and the day’s your own. Coxswain, gently there, or I’ll break your head—you infernal yelping, squeaking blackguard! Can’t you let a chest down into a jolly-boat without making one believe by your row that you are heaving up a best bower-anchor? Now then, Mr. Arran, we’re all ready! I’m sorry to part with you, but I hope I’m not so selfish as to prefer my own good to my neighbour’s. I won’t offer you any breakfast aboard here, for I heard Captain Mackay order his steward to lay the table against you came. Now, you’ve forgotten nothing, have you?”

“No.”

“Well, that’s right. Come, then, let’s shove off—though, stay! you’re sure that it’s near Portsmouth where this Admiral Fluke’s place is?”

“Oh, certain: I can show you his letter—here it is.”

“Ah!” said he, with a thoughtful air, as he took the sheet from my hand, “a capital old officer he is seemingly; I’ve often heard of him before. By Jove! I’m not certain that my steward doesn’t know him,—just allow me to ask?”

“Certainly,” said I; and he descended below for a few minutes, when he reappeared, and, returning me the letter, informed me that it was not the steward, but his brother, who was acquainted with the admiral.

“It seems he is milkman to the family, and by all accounts, a better-hearted man than the old flag-officer never existed; he’s one of my sort—he’s what I call an honest fellow: I wish you joy, sir, of such a friend! Now, then, I think we have nothing to detain us on board?”

“Nothing,” I replied, “except that you will allow me to pay for my passage.”

“Passage! tout, sir, I’ll not hear of such a thing.”

“Well, surely then, for my board.”

“Board! and you not out of your berth till yesterday even-

ing, what board will ye have been consuming? No, sir, no, keep your money, and when you've seen as much of the world as I have, you'll know more of the value of it."

"Well, but captain, I must insist that you won't put me under such deep obligations to you."

"Under nothing at all, sir! Put your purse in your pocket."

"But consider, captain, if the owner should hear that you have lost a passenger."

"Yes, but he won't hear; and if he does, I hope he's a heart to feel for a poor young orphan gentleman, like yourself, or if not, I'll bear the brunt of it."

"Oh! indeed, I cannot bear to think of that, indeed I cannot, and to one who has been so very kind—I insist," I continued, seeing that I was gaining on him, "that you take this small sum, in case my passage-money should be demanded at your hands."

"Well," he replied, taking the five guineas I held out to him, wrapped up in paper, and turning partly away, as if to conceal his emotion, "you're an honourable honest-hearted young gentleman; I won't wound your feelings by imposing any obligations upon you, so I'll hold this money in case it should be asked for, but if not, I can send it back to you at the admiral's."

"Nonsense!"

"Yes, yes, but I will though; and now I have to tell you, when you get on shore, don't you think of offering any money to my friend Captain Mackay there, for it will only offend him, mayhap, and be of no use. You'll find him, as I say, one of my fellows—an honest straightforward sailor. A little rough in the shell or so, but with a kernel worth a Jew's eye! Ah! sir, you're young, you don't know the worth of such men till you try them."

I bowed my head in token of acquiescence, and said nothing, for I felt that my heart was full, and truly did I think he spoke; for who, from the ill-favoured expression of his face, thought I, would argue such a kindness of heart—a kindness on my first entry upon the world's wide stage which quite surprised me, so different was it from what I had been led to expect.

In a few minutes we were alongside Captain Mackay's vessel. On reaching her deck, an air of neatness and order were perceptible on board which rather astonished me; so

different did everything appear to be, from the usual slovenly state which I had observed on board the few merchant vessels I had seen. The ropes were all taut, everything was in its place ; the decks, though not very white, were clean swept ; and I observed a number of small guns round the bulwarks, though the ports through which their muzzles were to be used, were put in and painted over on the outside, like the rest of the hull—black. A very short time, however, was allowed me to make my remarks on what I saw, for Captain Mackay coming on deck, I was introduced to him.

He was a short, thick, vulgar-looking man, pock-marked, and still more ill-favoured than his friend, but being already prejudiced in his favour, the first warm shake of his hand together with his hearty welcome, readily uttered in a true northern accent, dispelled all thoughts of distrust—if any such were lurking in a mind as yet almost too guileless to suspect. We now descended to breakfast. The captain of the smack snatching a hasty meal, rapidly talked over with his friend the old adventures they had enjoyed together ; the fate that chanced this comrade, the luck which had befallen that, and after one or two hearty laughs at bygone follies, rose from table to return on board.

“ Well, Mackay,” said he, “ I need not ask you again to do everything you can for this gentleman here, for I am sure I could not serve him better myself than you will. With such a fine breeze as this, if it lasts, you’ll be at Spithead in no time, and then I’ve promised that you’ll give him a-cast ashore at Sallyport, and let a couple of your men get his luggage on to the admiral’s ; ‘tis but a couple of hours’ walk, Mr. Arran, on the London road there. You turn down on the second turning to the right, and then——”

“ Thank you, kindly,” I replied, interrupting him in his description, “ but I will not trouble Captain Mackay any further than to set me ashore, when——”

“ Well, well, sir, that’s as you like. I’m sure Captain Mackay will be very happy to do that for you. Now, then, is there anything else I can do for you ?—Oh ! by the bye, Mackay, where do you intend to sling Mr. Arran’s hammock ? for he has a large sum of money about him, as much as seventy pounds, which he prefers to keep on his person ; so I tell him, he’d better keep his eye-teeth about him, for Jack tar knows how to thieve occasionally.”

"Ay, ay," growled Mackay, with a sort of suppressed laugh, "I have known chaps aboard a ship, as would think nothing, on a long voyage, of stealing your bones to make soup."

"Just so, Mackay; so I was thinking, captain, if you could lock it up for him."

"Ah!" said Mackay, slowly looking at me to see how I took this proposition, and then, as he saw me display no eagerness to benefit by such a kindness, "No, no, captain, I'll have nothing to do with other people's money, my own is plague enough for me; I dare say my lads are as honest as yours, and if he could take care of it aboard of you, why he can here, and so he must just guide his ain gear."

"Come, come, Mackay, I must be off," moving towards the companion ladder — then suddenly pausing, "Stay, though, I've one word more to say to you about that business of—" but the name here mentioned I lost, for pulling Mackay back into his sleeping berth, and sliding the door forward, I could only distinguish some slight whispering, accompanied by the chink of money, and in a few seconds they rejoined me, when we all three repaired upon deck. The captains shook one another warmly by the hand, and after cracking some joke between them, which was to me utterly unintelligible, save that it seemed to afford them mutual satisfaction, my friend gave me his hand for the last time, expressed himself sorry to miss my company, and descending over the side, was swiftly rowed to his own smack.

Long, however, before the last-named kind personage had gained his floating home, or even half-way, our main-yard was hauled, and we were once more bounding forward on our course. In a few minutes, also, the smack was freed from her restraint, her fore-tack being hauled over to windward, and turning her head in a different direction from that in which it had for some time been lying, the waters curled up beneath her fore-foot, and she too pursued her "path upon the mountain wave, her march upon the deep." Somewhat to my surprise, however, I observed that she was going in a track whose destination seemed considerably wide of ours, and mentioned my ideas on this subject to Captain Mackay, but he replied in a speech so loaded with technical terms, that I was fain silently to confess myself as wise on the subject as before, and to comply with his suggestion, that we should return to the breakfast-table and finish our meal.

I cannot say that even this, when we returned to it, consisted of anything very luxuriously inviting, but the captain seeming to be in a very jocular mood and full of funny stories, some portion of his mirth intuitively diffused itself over my own heart, and what with eating, drinking, and laughing, and congratulating myself on having thus forestalled all further trouble until our arrival at Portsmouth, I contrived to get through the time which intervened till noon.

The ship's bell having sounded seven (half-past eleven) for some little time past, an old hoary-headed seaman, who acted as quarter-master, came down, and taking on deck an instrument, which proved to be the captain's quadrant, we followed. Mackay now proceeded to take the sun, not with a view, as I afterwards learned, of getting the latitude, as the land was still in sight to windward, but merely for the purpose of correcting his time. My first impulse, on arriving on deck, was naturally to look for the smack, and not seeing her in any direction, as I thought, I asked the man at the helm, who replied to my inquiries by pointing with his finger, saying, "there she bears, sir, hull down astern." I looked in the direction indicated, and to my great surprise beheld what I considered a mere speck on the horizon. The seaman seeing my surprise, though he did not appear to consider it very natural, told me that there was a glass in the locker abaft. This I immediately drew forth and applied. That the vessel in question was the smack I had lately left I did contrive to make out, but it was as much from my having been told so, as from anything I could now discover. This, however, I did think, that if it was the smack she was proceeding in a course directly opposite to ours, for I remarked that her sails were trimmed to the breeze on the quarter, her square mainsail and topsail bearing her gallantly forward, and completely hiding her foresail and jib.

"Why! how is this, my good man?" said I, "she seems to be completely making away from us and sailing in the other direction, as if she were going back to Leith again?"—The seaman stared at me as if I had been mad, and with an incredulous smile, was about to reply, when the captain, who had heard my question, interrupted me—

"Look ye here, Mr. Arran, see to this; ye don't know how to handle a ship's glass yet, but I'll soon teach ye," and taking me with him once more to the taffrail, he made me look through the telescope while he stood by with the quadrant in

his hand. He then asked what I saw, and when I told him, he contradicted me, said I was quite wrong, that instead of seeing the sails I have named I saw others, and finally concluded by flooding my ears with a jargon of technicalities, and telling me that the smack's head was toward me and not her stern, and that she was following us under all sail. "But then, ye see, Mr. Arran, she can't think to sail wi' us. Ah! sir, my friend away there's a smart fellow, but before he can tow a line for me,* he must have a faster ship, ay, and though I say it, be a year or two longer afloat. Never mind the smack," seeing that I still regarded the movements of my late vessel with an uneasy eye, "if we're not at Portsmouth now before she's in London, my name's not Mackay."

Looking up at this moment, I thought I could detect a smile on my new tutor's countenance, but as I saw no cause for his amusement, the circumstance scarcely attracted my attention.

The sun being duly taken, and the twelve o'clock bell struck in consequence, the seamen went below to dinner, and the captain, moving towards his mate, asked me if I was not ready to accompany him to his meal. On my refusing, however, to partake of it, he returned to the spot where I was, seemed to hesitate for a moment or two as to what he should do, then giving his quadrant to the helmsman, and telling him to take it below, he took charge of the steerage wheel meanwhile, and endeavoured to persuade me to dine with him. This, however, I would not do; for, in truth, the wind having increased, my feelings told me that I should best consult my own comfort by staying on deck. After vainly endeavouring, therefore, to gain his point, Mackay was obliged to abandon it to the call of his steward, who came to tell him that everything was getting cold. Muttering a curse which I but imperfectly understood, he suddenly ordered the helmsman to keep the ship's head nearer to the wind, and mind what he was at; then, telling me not to speak to people on duty, he mentioned something to the mate, and withdrew to his table.

There was something about his conduct which at first put me in a rage—the idea of this low dog treating me in a way which almost amounted to being insolent. "So much," said I, "for putting myself under an obligation; I wish I had never come on board the sulky hound's vessel." Then again

* Meaning get ahead of him.

suspicions crossed me, I scarcely knew of what, for the captain's looks betrayed an uneasiness which I had caught, though unable to say why. For ten minutes I walked the deck very quietly, and then paused to look at the smack once more ; but the dot that now appeared upon the waters was far more like one of the winged denizens of the air, than a vessel capable of containing fifty or sixty human beings. "Why surely," I began to remark to the mate.——"Can't attend to that," surlily answered the fellow, leaving me to my meditations, while he walked forward to the forecastle. Wishing that his impudence might choke him, I turned to the helmsman, who seemed to have somewhat more of the traces of humanity about his countenance, but scarcely had I uttered two words, when I heard the mate's voice thundering from forward—"Jackson, d'ye hear, 'tend to the conn (the steering of the vessel). Port—"

" Port it is."

" Very well, dice no higher."

" What in the name of fortune can this conduct mean ? " thought I, not a little alarmed at such a change in the demeanour of those around me. Very little time, however, was allowed me for solving this question, for in a few minutes the captain made his appearance, and ordered the mate to send the hands upon deck, and shake out a reef in the topsails. Finding that during this evolution I was likely to be considerably in the way, I went down to the cabin, determining to send the captain to Coventry for the next twenty-four hours, to teach him " manners ;" and you shall learn how I succeeded.

On reaching the cabin, the effluvia from the dinner affected me so much that I was fain to lie down, when I soon fell asleep. About five o'clock I awoke, and, to my great joy, beheld the steward arranging the tea-things. Of this meal, I partook in company with the captain, taking especial care to say as little as possible, in order to mark my sense of his behaviour.

I did not expect, however, that such conduct would produce much impression on one of his phlegm, and I was right. His society had now consequently became very hateful to me, and I therefore hurried upon deck. Here, however, I was not much better off, every one appeared anxious to shun me, and with whomsoever I might enter into conversation, I invariably

received some crabbed reply, or answer indistinctly muttered, and very often neither.

Imprecating again and again the impatience which had entrapped me into a dependence on such a brute as the captain, I comforted myself by thinking that my stay with him would be very short; and as night was setting in, and the land had for some hours past been declared out of sight, I betook myself—not to my little cabin—for even that apology for comfort was here denied me—but to a thing they called a hammock.

CHAPTER IV.

AT an early hour on the ensuing morning I awoke. A loud noise of water splashing about the decks was distinctly audible; and though not particularly fond of early rising, my state of inquietude prompted me to array myself and repair on deck.

Here I found the vessel under a very fair press of sail, going through the water at the rate of eight knots an hour. A stiff breeze was blowing; the reefs taken in the sails at nightfall on the preceding evening had just been let out; the mate, seated on the hammock-rail of the quarter-deck, was directing three men to get an additional pull at the top-gallant halyards, while some more of the sailors were deluging with water the deck, which they had just scrubbed with their brooms.

Getting out of the way as quickly as I could, I walked forward, and mounting a slight elevation in the middle of the deck, where the spare spars supported the boats, I looked around for the land.

Wherever I turned my eye, an illimitable space of blue appeared. The ocean met the sky in every direction, while a few dots upon the former,—which I knew to be ships containing fellow-creatures, however distant,—alone relieved the sense of our dreariness. The scene to me was new; and for several minutes I enjoyed the somewhat stern but not unpleasant ideas thus called into existence. Observing a vessel on our weather beam, I thought it might be the smack, and forgetful for an instant of the unsatisfactory replies I had hitherto received to my questions, I turned to the nearest hand to make the inquiry.

Close beside stood a lad; his age might have been nineteen,

verging on twenty. He was employed in the wringing of swabs, a sort of mop used in drying the decks. As I looked at him, it struck me that I had never before observed a figure which, in mould of form and expression of feature, came so near to that which I had always imagined to be the perfection of a sailor. In height he was about six feet. The extreme breadth of his shoulders, however, and the size of his powerful and sinewy limbs, contributed to make him appear less.

As the ship rolled in her incessant motion, the young seaman balanced himself on his feet with an ease which I quite envied, and I concluded, from the apparent suppleness of his limbs and his slight waist, that his activity was not surpassed even by his vigour. His features, though somewhat sunburnt, were fair. They were not regular, but of a very striking expression! his gray eye was large and quick, full of fire and feeling. Around his temples grew a quantity of light hair, which, as it played in the morning breeze, appeared to me to be the most beautiful I had ever beheld. Altogether, his countenance bespoke a manly truth and candour of character which at once attracted my regard. Nor was this feeling towards him lessened, by my fancying that I could trace the stern and melancholy expression with which Sorrow seldom fails to mark the features of her victims. He laughed and sang, it is true; but there was evident beneath this, a bitterness, the source of which I of course knew not. I looked at him, however, with a degree of pleasure for which, at that time, I could scarcely account; for I read in his appearance a sympathy which I had in vain hoped to find elsewhere on board.

Such, when I first knew him, was WILL WATCH—for by this name I had heard him called—a being hitherto unknown to me, and with whom I now found myself thrown by the mere hand of chance. Yet with his destinies mine were to be woven by one of those strange but common fatalities which form, indeed, the warp and woof of life.

Having applied to my new acquaintance to be informed whether any one of the vessels now in sight might be the Leith smack,—

“ Bless your soul!” said he, with much good-humour, “ why she must be up by the Nore by this time, or if she’s had good luck, ten to one but she isn’t in the river.”

“ Which river do you mean? The Thames?”

“ Ay, to be sure I do.”

“What then! we must be far past it?”

“Far past it!” ay, but what of that?” and Will’s face assumed an air of curiosity.

“Why, I mean,” returned I, “that as we were a long way ahead of the smack, when we saw her last, and she is now in the Thames, we must of necessity be considerably nearer Portsmouth.”

“Portsmouth!” with an incredulous and somewhat supercilious air, “why, that may be true enough; but where d’ye think we’re going?”

“To Spithead, to be sure.”

“Who told you so?”

“The captain, of course.”

“Why then the captain told you a ——” but at this juncture my informant received a severe blow on the side of his head, from the telescope of the mate, who interrupted him with, “Come, sir, hold *your* slack! Who asked you for your oar?”

“My oar?” repeated Will. “I tell you what it is, you cowardly——”

In an instant the mate’s glass was lifted, but long before it could descend, one of the swabs which Will Watch had been wringing, was swung round with his whole force, and the hard knotted end coming in contact with his aggressor’s face, it sent him staggering against the bulwarks, which he struck violently and rolled along the deck. In a second, three of the men sprang forward to his assistance, as well as to secure Will, who, nothing daunted, received the first with a blow that sent him to join company with the mate—the second assailant was more fortunate, for, having armed himself with some temporary weapon, he fell on his younger opponent with such fury that the latter staggered beneath the attack.

Closing with him, however, Will managed to gripe him by the throat, a moment’s struggle ensued, and down they went together: Will Watch being uppermost. Several other seamen now rushed to overpower him. I saw that he was profusely bleeding from his first wound, and consequently by this time stood no chance: and enraged at this execrable piece of tyranny, I seized the first thing at hand, and, comparative pygmy as I was, began to lay about me.

Further than this I recollect nothing, for suddenly I felt myself crushed as it were to atoms; a dreadful pain passed

over me—a sudden light flashed before my eyes—and then everything was dark.

After some further suffering, I regained my senses, and found myself bound hands and feet, lying on the deck of the captain's cabin. My head was aching with the most excruciating agony—I was so sick that I scarcely felt I could call myself alive, and, to add to my afflictions, I was parched with a thirst such as I never felt before, and devoutly hope I never may again. Among whom could I have fallen, and for what purpose was I thus treated? I had undoubtedly been plundered. My purse—I had worn it in a secret pocket inside my waistcoat, so that at any time, by bringing my arm close to my side, I could feel that it was safe—was no longer to be felt;—my watch—my poor father's watch, almost the sole remaining memento of its donor, the prince—that too was in its place no longer.

It would be useless to attempt describing the fury—the remorse—the agony—which I felt by turns during the half hour which I was allowed to lie in this pitiable condition. A life of ordinary sorrows was nothing to those thirty minutes.

At length, when scarcely certain whether I had not become an inhabitant of Pandemonium, I heard the footsteps of some person descending the companion-ladder, and in a few minutes the steward entered. With all the power that was left to me I implored his assistance, but whether my voice was no longer distinguishable by my fellow beings, or whether, like the rest of his companions on board, his heart was steeled against all human sympathies, I know not; but with a thousand imprecations on his head, I beheld him proceed with the operation of cleaning the cups which the captain had used for breakfast, and, that finished, whisk his filthy towel under his arm, give me such a glance as one would throw on a litter of blind puppies drowning in a tub, and then, with a hop, skip, and jump, return upon deck.

The filthy odours of the cabin, at this sight, seemed to overpower me more strongly than ever; the bulkheads apparently whirled around me; hideous phantoms, I thought, were dancing before my eyes; and the scene was becoming gradually more confused, when I heard the whine of some animal on deck. This was followed by the hated voice of the captain, who demanded of his steward, with many abusive oaths and epithets, whether his spaniel bitch had received her breakfast. I could

not hear the reply, but, from the sound of blows and altercation which followed, I rightly judged that the scoundrel was receiving a just punishment for his omission.

What a fiendish joy did that thought diffuse over my expiring heart ! For two brief seconds I was sensible of neither thirst or pain, and then with unspeakable gladness, though I know not why—for I was ignorant that it could bode any good to me—I heard the steward's descending step again.

He entered my den of misery, followed by the hungry dog ; so eager was it to get at the forthcoming food that its fawning would scarcely allow it to be prepared. Flinging some biscuit into a tub of water with the rinsings of the milk jug, the menial villain set this miserable fare before the famished hound, whom it seemed his delight to starve ; and chuckling at having thus mocked its hunger, he turned to depart.

Mustering my last energies, I endeavoured to appeal to his pity, but the foam of commencing madness had already gathered on my lips, and the howl that escaped from them failed to excite any other feeling but derision in the breast of the monster who beheld me. Imitating the sound I had expressed, he demanded with a curse who was to be my servant, and hopping up the companion-ladder as before, left me to my despair.

I was indeed desperate ! I tried to pray ; but the power of thinking clearly had already left me. I heard the sound of water as the poor spaniel lapped up her scanty meal. This alone was wanting to goad me on to the last pitch, and supported in this extremity by the strong instinct of human nature, I managed, though how I know not, to roll myself over to the tub from which the animal was feeding. Either from the unnatural appearance which my face must have exhibited, or from the dictates of a disposition that shamed its master-brutes, the docile creature quietly permitted me to share a meal already insufficient for its own necessities. Water I knew the animal could easily get, and therefore drained the vessel as nearly as I could to the last drop ; but of the biscuit I contented myself with two pieces, when I laid my exhausted head upon the deck. After thus accomplishing my sudden rescue from so hideous a death, I felt as if worlds would be paltry to show my gratitude or pay my debt to my dumb deliverer. I almost thought it knew this, for when its allowance was finished, it came and put its deliciously cold nose against my fevered

temples, and then seemed to examine all my limbs, till it came to my bound hands: these it licked; and I distinctly remember the poor dog going to the foot of the companion and whining piteously for a few minutes, then, finding itself unheeded, it returned and couched itself by my side.

This appeal in my behalf, which I cannot now remember without emotion, was not, however, doomed to be in vain, and I soon heard footsteps overhead as if some one was about to come down; all that I can now call to mind being, that I heard the captain's voice.

A long dream of images, confused and indistinct, passed over me, and from it I at length awoke under the following circumstances.

The ship's bells were just striking, and I endeavoured, though in vain, to count them. Seeing amid the gloom around me the figure of some person sitting near the hammock in which I was lying, I inquired how many bells struck then. The person to whom I had applied started up and answered, "Seven, sir."

"What—why—where am I?" looking round as the powers of thought began to re-assert their dominion. "What place is this? Is that you, Will Watch?"

"Yes, sir, I'm Will Watch, and a long watch it's been over ye, but ye're pulling up a bit now, and I hope it's all over."

"Over!" I repeated, faintly; "is it over? I'm very glad of it. Did I go to bed last night? Surely I've had some very—Why, Watch, this looks like blood!"

"Ay, ay, sir, that's blood, sure enough! Your nose has been bleeding;"—seeing that I was somewhat alarmed—"but you must lie quiet here for ten minutes, and I'll be back again." He never came, however, and I, with the powers of consciousness but half revived, fell fast asleep once more.

On the following day, about ten o'clock, I again awoke to find him sitting near me. By degrees, as I looked at him in the stronger light of a fine morning, which not even this dismal hole could totally exclude, I began to recall the circumstances under which I had last seen him. His appearance tended not a little to refreshen these sad reminiscences. He looked haggard and faded; his dress no longer presenting the extreme neatness which first struck me, and his figure fallen away.

After lying awake for some moments thus sadly employed, and summoning resolution to bear with firmness the evil news which my heart foreboded to be in store for me, I said, "Will Watch, I remember all that has passed. Tell me, I implore you, how long have I been here?" Then seeing that he hesitated, "You need not be afraid; I am prepared for the worst—how long?"

"Seventeen days to-day, sir," replied Will, in a low sad tone, without looking up from the deck, on which he was dejectedly gazing.

"Then why," lowering my voice to a whisper, "have we not arrived at Portsmouth?"

"What, sir," said poor Will, deeply affected, and at the same time averting his face, "haven't they told you where we're bound to?"

"No one, Watch; no one has informed me. I implore you tell me all—tell me the worst—I suspect I can bear anything better than this horrible uncertainty. Where are we bound?"

"For the coast of Africa!"

"For what purpose?" I breathlessly demanded.

"The slave trade."

"Merciful God protect me," I faintly exclaimed, dropping back upon my pillow, "or I am lost!"

Still I seemed to dream, and prayed that it might prove so, but it was in vain I tried to deem my agony illusive! For a few seconds neither of us spoke.

"Will Watch, I have no friend, I see, but you on board. Tell me faithfully, am I kidnapped?"

"I fear, sir," replied the poor fellow, "'tis—'tis something like it."

"But, Watch, will they sell me for a slave? Surely they cannot intend to do that?"

"Lord knows, sir, whether the slug-hounds think of that, or whether they can manage it. But, please God, they shan't while I've an arm to lift against it;" and as he spoke, Will's eyes were filled with tears. For some time we remained silent.

"Watch," at length said I, "you look very ill yourself. What have they been doing with you? Did they not knock you down for speaking to me on the forecastle?"

"Ay, sir, the cowardly lubbers! What could one do agen

so many? However, they didn't get off so whole after all, as some o' them could wish! As for me, I got an ugly scratch on the side of the head, but I'm used to that. I was up and at my duty again afore night came on, taking my turn at the wheel. No, sir, I was more consarned to see you floored by that — skipper," lowering his voice to conceal the execration accompanying the name.

"Was the villain who struck me, then, the captain?"

"Ay, sir, and whenever my hand happens to make friends with his throat"—clenching his powerful fingers—"may I be a spiritless ~~knob~~ for life if I don't pay the last farthing back to the cowardly cut-throat for that same. I'd just turned my eye astern at that moment, and tho'f I couldn't assist ye, seeing that I'd two aboard o' me, I saw the villain driving at ye from behind—for he'd just come up the companion, d've see. I hallooed, but ye didn't hear me, for I saw him catch ye just at the back of the head, in the large o' the neck—a ticklish sort of a place—and down ye went—lor, sir, for all the world like a pig o' lead. I never thought to have heard ye speak in this world again, ye went down so deadlike; and now the worst is over, a hard time ye've had of it, and no wonder."

"But surely, Watch, they must have bound me hand and foot, for I remember something in the cabin."

"Ay, ay, sir, very like they did, though I didn't see it, for ye see they served me much after the same sort, though it doesn't play such a bobbery with me, 'cause, you see, I've been bred up to it. But never mind, sir, we'll pay them back; only wait a bit till you come round a little. You're not very strong, nor yet very tall, nor yet very old, sir, but," whispering, "a bold heart and a sharp eye—them's the things that tell. I've long wanted a helpmate to get out of this accursed prison-ship and only wait till you get round a bit, and we'll show 'em a trick or two!"

"Pray Heaven we may be able, Watch! But tell me, was I not lashed hand and foot in the captain's cabin, or is it my fancy which misleads me?"

"No, no, sir, you're all right as to the thinking of that, and there I believe you might have lain till this time—if so be you'd lived so long, and the captain's dog hadn't set up a howling over ye. That spaniel is the only creature on board the captain has a thought for, so when he heard the animal singing out, he walked below, and seeing you were well nigh dead, he thought

the lower deck might serve your turn for hauling your wind as well as his cabin : so old Mason—the stone-hearted dog—brings you down here, and flings you on a grating in the corner there, where I found you some hours after, when I came to myself and began to cast about. And, sir, I just came up to the captain as he was standing here maybe by your side ; and speaking low, so as no one else could tell what it was, I said, ‘ Captain Mackay, if this young gentleman dies you’ve murdered him : but that’s neither here nor there : you must look to that : that’s your business. One would think you’d have liked to keep clear of such a scrape, for your head won’t be the more stoutly shipped on your shoulders for that ;—but mind, Captain Mackay, I say this,—and you know if I’m likely to keep my word,—if you, or any man on board, by your leave, touches this young gentleman to heave him overboard, before the breath’s clean out of his body, I’ll watch my time, and blow *your* brains out first, and his afterwards ; and here,’ said I, turning back the top of my waistcoat, and showing him a bit of cold steel,—‘ here,’ said I, ‘ is the pistol that’ll do it ! ’ ”

“ And what said he ? ”

“ Why he looked for a minute as if he’d try to take it from me. ‘ You may have this and welcome,’ said I, ‘ though it shall cost the number of some one’s mess first—for the matter of that—there are plenty of knives in the ship—I shan’t touch ye at first—I shall wait my time—you know a little o’ Will Watch, and a gash in your throat or a hole in your head, captain, are much about the same for his purpose when he’s once said it. You’ve robbed the young gentleman clean enough,’ said I, ‘ and got all he has, why should you go to murder him ? ’ Well, sir, he looked on me as if he would have eat me ; but he knows,” said Will, with a scornful expression of the lip, “ that I’m no chicken when once put up ; so he thought better of it, and turning round, he made sail on deck ; and I, seeing how matters were likely to go if you didn’t come round on the other tack a little quicker, got ye a drop of grog that evening, and next morning you were blowing away as fresh as ever.”

“ But Watch, you talk of the captain’s having robbed me, have you any proof of that ? ”

“ Proof ! lor, sir, you talk as if we were in a civilised place, instead of being here among a parcel of natural salvages, as ye may say. You may take my after-davy,* sir, he’s got all you’ve

lost, and ten to one if you were to ask him, would laugh to your face and tell you so. I've no proof of it any further than that Tom Bender let out, that, as he was looking down the after skylight, he saw the captain kneeling by your side, and rummaging your pockets, from which he pulled something ; and Tom heard the chink of a purse. After this he saw the skipper lash your hands and feet, and then go into his sleeping berth, shutting the door after him."

"Then what course, Watch, would you advise me to take?"

"Why as to that, sir, you'd better think about it as little as possible till you get round again, pretty stout, and then we'll see what they intend to do with you, and that'll show us what's best to be done."

In one or two days, however, I was able to leave my hammock and crawl about between decks. By degrees my ramble extended of an evening to the forecastle, taking care always to avoid the scoundrel Mackay ; for in several consultations which I had held with Will, he most strenuously dissuaded me from adopting the line of conduct which I felt to be most consonant with my feelings—that of openly demanding from the villain who had so used me, a reason for his atrocious conduct, and a restitution of the property of which I had been plundered. The more, however, that I reflected on the matter, the more I was convinced that my counsellor was right in his arguments. For—as he said—should I show any external proof of my being inclined to resist, the wretch who had me so completely in his power, far from listening to any of my demands, would only be irritated to some further outrage, and perhaps attempt to make away with me at once. If, on the other hand, I kept out of his way, it necessarily led him to think less of the past, and even should his thoughts revert to me and my ultimate disposal, he would, by my seeming supineness under such wrongs, be certainly led to underrate my character and means of harming him, and perhaps be lulled into a security which would end in restoring us to freedom.

My chest having been conveyed below, and duly ransacked, during that space of time in which I was tottering on the confines of the grave, I was now allowed access to it, and for a very sufficient reason. The lock having been broken open, every article which had the least value in the eyes of the depredators had been stolen, and the small remainder of my goods and chattels reduced to the most complete state of confu-

sion. My first thought on the discovery of this fact was to ascertain the loss or safety of my parent's manuscript. This, to my inexpressible joy, I soon found; and getting into an unobserved corner, I indulged in the sad pleasure of re-perusing it. On coming to the conclusion and seeing how much it might have saved me if I had attended to its advice, I determined that I would guard against the risk of losing it by any future accident similar to the one which had now befallen me. To this end, I made a copy of it on a much smaller scale than the original, which last I resolved, at least for the present, to carry about my person; and for the still better preservation of the copy, I wrote it out in French.

When this was once accomplished, I felt that I had still much, very much, for which to be thankful, and greatly did I bless the ignorance of my robbers, which had spared for my benefit that which they deemed of no value to themselves. Every succeeding day now brought with it an increase of health and strength; and emboldened by the captain's never appearing to take any notice of me, I ventured occasionally, when Will Watch was off duty, and the weather was fine, to climb up with him into the fore-top, where, basking on a sail in the sun's warm rays, and gently fanned at the same time by the delicious breezes of the ocean, we talked in stealth of all our hopes and wishes, and the various plans that by turns presented themselves for our emancipation from our present lot, as well as the numerous obstacles which threatened the riveting of our hated chains.

On our freedom we were determined; and only prayed for a favourable opportunity to peril our lives in the attempt. Turn the chances as we would, the only probability of success seemed to lie in the issue of a mutiny. On this we would most cheerfully have ventured at any moment, could we have reckoned on any likely number to support us, but such a step we dared not undertake with the captain and crew to a man opposed to us; and the question constantly arising, what should we do with the ship, even were our foes overcome!

With feelings approaching as near to despair as my youth would permit, I now saw that only one plan of operations was remaining, which promised anything like a happy issue,—and against this what fearful odds were staked?

This "*ultima spes*" rested on our calmly waiting until such time as we should have taken on board our cargo of human

wretchedness, and then, by loosing the slaves, we could insure the mastery of the vessel. To me, however, this did indeed look forlorn, for in addition to the horrors of giving the rein to the passions of these poor unenlightened creatures, was added the fear of such an opportunity never being permitted to us.—“How,” I demanded of myself, “can I imagine that Mackay will, after the past, be blind to the risk of allowing us to stay on board? It surely is his interest to prevent my ever returning to Europe, and when will such favourable chances of being rid of me, present themselves as those which will court his attention every day that we remain on the slave coast?” Tormented by this hideous prospect, I had no longer any comfort but in my prayers, that any death might be reserved for me rather than life upon such terms.

CHAPTER V.

TOWARDS the latter part of a fine sunny day, in the forenoon of which Will Watch had been doing duty at the wheel, I lay as usual, talking over with him in the fore-top, the various sorrowful subjects which presented themselves for our contemplation. Having arrived at the dilemma above stated, a mutual silence seemed to acknowledge our despair. We both remained gazing on the exquisite scene outstretched before us.

The sun intensely shining in the lower arch of heaven was lighting, with an unearthly purity of lustre, a massy pile of clouds in the opposite quarter of the sky. Gorgeous domes and palaces, plains of unmeasured field, and cities of surpassing splendour, seemed to unroll in endless creation before us, while the mind intuitively pictured to itself the city of light—the New Jerusalem of St. John, and I thought with envy of those glad spirits whom the sorrows of this world could no longer trouble.

A fine full breeze was carrying us merrily over the joyous waters, so seemingly proud and glorious in the unsullied purple of their hue, while in their profound depths, remote from human ken, the sportive sunbeams might be lingering in scenes of unimagined loveliness. As I contemplated these objects with emotion, I could not but think with how much suffering so lovely a sight had been purchased. I thought also of the

delight with which I had so often wandered over the untamed hills of dear old Scotland : of the different, but not less exciting, beauty of her scenery, where, at this very hour, I had frequently seen the sun, as now, sinking to its rest,—not over the broad and seemingly boundless horizon of the sea, but behind the blue highland zone of the —shire hills.

And was I doomed never again to see those beloved haunts of my childhood ? and were these to be exchanged for an existence in slavery and woe ? The thought was insupportable, and I turned for relief to my kind friend Will, who, stretched at his length with his head upon his arms, was looking in the direction in which he imagined old England to lie.

He was humming over a wild but touching air which I had often heard on his lips before. I had frequently asked him to sing it to me, but this he showed a reluctance to do, making various excuses—"It was nothing"—"Some rhymes of his own"—"It was only an old song of his sister's."

On hearing that he had such a relation, I naturally asked some questions about her. I soon saw, however, that he liked still less to be catechised on this score. I had, of course, many opportunities of alluding to the subject, and perceived with satisfaction that he grew less sensitive of inquiry on this point, until on the last mention of this topic between us, he promised, at some future day, to tell me the particulars.

Thinking I could never have a better opportunity, I determined to try and gain the promised information at once. "Watch," said I, "you promised, a few days ago, to give me the history of that song you are now singing—nay, if I mistake not, you said it was one of your sister's. Come, then, be kind enough to let me have the story, and if it relates to home, so much the better ; it is as well to talk of that which perhaps we may never see more—I at least, I fear, have seen it for the last time."

"Ah, sir," returned Will, sighing, "I was a happier fellow when I first heard that song, and yet I contrived, too, to make myself pretty miserable, like a fool for my pains, as you shall hear. But it's no use grieving,—I promised, as you say, sir, to spin you the yarn of my first going to sea, and so I ought, too, seeing, sir, you were kind enough to let me into the right, of your coming aboard this floating devilry ;" for on regaining my right senses I found that I had, during the preceding delirium, mentioned names and circumstances which scarcely left

me anything to relate. Thinking that I could, however, rely on Will's fidelity, I, notwithstanding the dreadful lesson I had received, pursued what I considered to be the best course, and binding my communicant over to secrecy, filled up the vacancies which the fever's ravings had left in my sombre story. These, however, Will's acuteness and sagacity had pretty well supplied.

"You mustn't expect much of a story, sir," continued Will, "but such as it is, here goes:—

"Ye see, sir," proceeded Will, "my father was a Kentish man, and the earliest thing I recollect about him, or myself either, is being dandled about by a tall, stout, rough old chap, some six feet high, with a nor'wester tarpauline shipped on his knowledge-box, a reg'lar sea-built pea-jacket on, and a pair of jack boots coming up to his middle. Ah, sir, he was the chap for a natty fellow! As for his voice,—there, sir, he'd stun a hundred boatswains, pipes and all, and not be out o' breath at the end of it:—ah, sir, he was the right sort o' fellow, I don't doubt; but ye see, sir, I never knew much of him, for happening to haul his head-yards rather of a sudden one fine morning, he paid slap off before the wind, and was out o' sight to leeward, before my old mother could cry out Jack Robinson, and even that I'm thinking wouldn't have stopped him. However, says she, all's one for that, and when a man's time is come why 'way aloft! and when a fellow's glass is out, why topsides down and turn him, and no piping about it, either here or there. So the old 'oman takes to blacks and drops o' brandy, and in six months she's spliced again, taut as ever."

"And how old was the old 'oman when she married again, Will?"

"Oh, seven or eight-and-twenty or thirty, sir, or thereaway."

"Why that's a young woman, Will!"

"Ay, ay, sir, belike it is, but I calls 'em old, because, ye see, sir, it's a way o' talking a fellow gets hold on at sea."

"Then how old was your father?"

"Close upon forty, sir, and bating that I know nothing about it, as fine a fisherman as ever hooked a mackarel."

"But, Will, you have forgotten to tell me how old you were when he died, as well as the name of the place you were born in?"

"Ay, that's true, sir! Let me see, I wasn't much more than a year old, I believe, for ye see my father hadn't been

married long—but let that stand.—Hold hard a minute, sir, where was I? Oh, my old mother—well, you see, sir, instead of splicing in again with one of the right old craft, she gets a hold on some mechanical timber-toed chap—not that he hadn't all his limbs of the reg'lar sort o' flesh and blood, and they no light ones, but he was a stiff-headed fellow, you see, sir, a reg'lar pia-wau-wau-picked-up-along-shore-hauberk."

"What do you mean by that, Watch?"

"Hem, sir! why I hardly know how to make it out to ye: but, ye see—ye see, sir,—to be short and sweet, sir, it's a sort o' fellow I wouldn't give a quid for."

"Aha, Will! I see—proceed—that's perfectly explained."

"Well, that's right, sir, but he was a fellow they call a porter, as long odds apart from my father, save for the matter o' being a good-looking fellow and six feet in his shoes—ay, sir, as a snake from a conger eel.—Well, ye see, sir, the first thing that my new daddy did, was to serve me out monkey's allowance: more kicks than coppers. So the old 'oman, sir, as she wouldn't stand this, she gives it back to him again, kicks and coppers both, in right good trim, and as she's one of your strappers he didn't always get the best of it. Well, this lark went on pretty well for a year, and a nice time I had of it atwixt the pair on 'em, there's not a doubt on't; till at last the old 'oman brings me a little sister, and God bless her for it, say I—I'll thank her for the little darling to the last day I have to live; tho' it didn't look as if I should then, for ye see, as soon as the old 'oman had a daughter to care about, she left off being so soft upon the son, and I was bundled off to an uncle, who lived in another little seaport some way from High-cliff." (For so I shall designate the place in question.)

"What, is that the name of the place where you were born?"

"Yes, sir; but however, I was sent off, as I said, to my uncle at Greybeach, a good old sort of chap, who'd no piccannies of his own, so he and his wife took care of me, and a fine time I had of it; he was just the sort of old fellow I liked to be with, he was a true chip o' the old block, a fisherman like my father, and so you see, when I shot ahead a bit, he taught me to patch and paint our old coble of a boat, mend his nets, and keep his gear in order, till, just as I began to like him, and we were used to one another's ways, the poor old man—God bless him!—died! Well," continued Watch, with

a sigh, after pausing for a few seconds, "there was no help for it! his wife, poor old soul, had slipped her wind some time before, and I was left to make the best o' my way how I could home to my mother, and came back to the old 'oman somewhere close upon my sixteenth birthday, or, for anything I know, a cast or so this side of it. For, directly I heard my poor old uncle was dying, I knew how it would go, and seeing I should be obliged to return home, I looked out for the worst, so I wasn't disappointed.

"Old Woodenhead, as I used to call the old 'oman's husband—Old Woodenhead and I, we made but queerish work of it, but I was too big for him to fall-to at his old work, and he, too, had grown a year or two older, and had no great relish for that sort of lark where two could play at it, so, like a cat and a dog in a barrel, we kept as far apart as we could, and hadn't much to say to one another, 'cept a little civil growling now and then.

"As for the old 'oman, she'd got a barky or two of her own to look after, and lumbering sort o' craft they were; I dare say you mind to have seen the like of 'em, sir, before now.—Bathing machines they call 'em ashore.—However, sir, there was one," and here Will's voice sunk into a soft low tone, "there was one I found by the old fire-side, made up for all.—This was my sister—my sister Fanny—she was just a year or so short o' my own age—the gentlest, kindest hearted little creature as ever human eyes were set on. Well, this ye see, sir, was what I never counted on,—for ye see, sir, ye see, I don't know how 'twas, but"—and here I saw the truant blood stealing over Will's speaking countenance—"I never before cared much to be idling about with 'oman kind, but somehow or other, my little sister Fanny—she—she—seemed to be the only one, 'cept my good old uncle and his dame, who ever cared about Will Watch, and so"—the "rebel tear" was glistening in his eye,—"my little Fanny was all I cared to leave!—I say leave, ye see, sir, for there was no one else to care about at home. The old 'oman, sir—to say her fair—I believe, liked me well enough, and if any fellow ever said any thing against me when my back was turned, she soon a brought 'em to the rights of it,—but what's that, sir? a young fellow feels a something—perhaps you mightn't know exactly what I mean—a sort of longing for something to care about."

"Yes, Will, I know too well what you would say."

“ Well, then, sir, ye see, if it hadn’t been for little Fanny, I should a been off in quick sticks, and taken my chance of rough and smooth, but I soon had to know we were brother and sister!—and as neither one of us could bear to talk of starting, I hung on there long enough after I should, or perhaps ought to have done; for though the old oman was my mother, old Woodenhead had no right to find a stout young fellow in rations.

“ However, sir, I was saying, there I hung out idling about all the day with Fanny, now in the fields and on the hills, and now and then, of a warm summer’s morning, along the beach, and working hard out fishing all night, blow storm or not, to make up for lost time and keep old Woodenhead quiet, by flinging into the mess the money fetched by the fish. For ye see, sir, he didn’t much know or care, I suppose, for the matter o’ that, whether they were caught by day or night, and never being at home himself, ‘cept at meal times, he couldn’t tell whether Fan was in or out. Well, ’twas much the same with the old ‘oman, and as we always had a look out ahead, and kept out o’ the way of either of them, they didn’t see much more about the matter than we wished, more especially as old Woodenhead made little Fan contribute her share by the way of needlework, and fancy things o’ one sort and another;—and so to help her out, that she shouldn’t be behind hand, I got her to teach me the knack of sewing fine, as I used to call it; and as a sailor should always be a handy chap, and know something o’ the matter, I soon got to make a pretty good fist of it, for ye see, my uncle had made a good sail-maker of me, and so from cutting out a lug-sail, stitching in a bolt-rope, and herring-boning an old jib, I got to using the thimble instead o’ the palm, and making all sorts o’ knick-nackeries. Ah, sir, those were the times! We used to play about, it’s true, but we worked hard notwithstanding! Many and many’s the time I’ve come home at five o’clock in the morning, after fishing all night, to take a bit of a snoose, then up and had my breakfast, and strolled out with little Fanny to an old lonesome tumbledown sort of a place, pretty nigh a heap o’ ruins. There, under the lee of an old fruit wall, we used to sit, chattering in the sun, little Fanny working at her needle as busy as a bee, and I helping. Ah, you may laugh, sir! It’s true enough; to be sure, I used to make some queerish mistakes with some of the women’s gear at first, and

many's the joke we've had together, but I used to help the little girl, and she thought so, that was better. See here, sir, here's some of my work."

"What those initials in gold thread?"

"Gold, sir! Lor, sir, that's not gold! though it's something better.—It's Fanny's hair, only the sun's catching on it.—No, sir, she put that in herself, the rest is mine," pointing to the embroidering in silk which ornamented the end of his neckerchief, and certainly was very neatly done.

"It goes to my heart to wear out anything that's got that mark on it, but then all my kit are tallied in the same way, and it's nigh two years now since we parted, and if I was to buy other rigging to save this, why, ye understand, a sailor's life's no very sure thing at the best, and if any thing should happen to Will—why, wouldn't he like to have about him—a—a—?"

"True, Will!" said I, seeing he has unable to finish the sentence.

"Well, well, sir!" he resumed, after a pause, "this was the sort o' life we used to lead out o' doors, but at home, would you believe it, sir? old Woodenhead wouldn't let well alone. No, the lubberly, skulking old dog-fish couldn't be easy! No, he couldn't bear sailors—I shouldn't be brought up a sailor—'twas such a life!—'twas killing me!—I was over seventeen and away, and to be sure 'twas hard work, but I didn't feel it, for the worse the weather, and the more I got of it, the stronger I seemed to grow; but that wouldn't do—I must be brought up to some honest trade to make my bread by.—He'd prentice me to a bricklayer, but I said I'd see him like a horse in a ditch first: well, then there was a shindy, no peace or quiet for any of us, and they began to set at little Fan, and try to keep us apart, but that I wouldn't stand.—Well, at last, Fan herself takes and talks me over, and begs and prays that I would do as her father wished me; and she said, too, she'd rather I'd be a mason fellow ashore, than have to go fishing out night and day, and stand a chance of being swamped!"

— "Dear! dear! It went very hard against me to hear such a word from her, and I tried to put her in some sort o' right reason about it—but Lor, sir!—the dear creatures, there's no making them understand that! Says I, do you think, Fan, our time's not as much logged ashore here, as 'tis afloat? and

don't you think, Fan, says I, if a chap's time is up, there's not as much chance of a fellow being capsized from the top o' a house, as from a spirt o' wind coming down 'twixt these very hills? 'Why, she didn't know; the sea,' she said 'always drowned people who went to the bottom; and as for the wind,' says Fan, 'that's worse again, for it's always doing something, somewhere or other, and there never was a ship upset yet, that the wind hadn't something to do with it!' As if, ye see, sir, bricks and mortar were made o' hold-fast, and a rotten old ladder stronger than a five-inch rope. 'Besides,' adds little Fanny, 'if you stay on shore I shall always be able to see you, but when you go to sea, Will, you know you must go alone.' 'Now,' said I, 'you've hit it,' and so as there was no making less of this part of the story, I promised that she should have it all her own way, and that I'd try my hand at it, though all the while I couldn't bear to think of being a land-lubber like this. However, sir, little Fan was all joy, thinking the matter was settled, and I went to make a trial of my new trade. Oh dear! Fried fish and skittle-pins! There was no making anything of it, though I tried very hard, too, for Fan's sake; but I found 'twasn't so comfortable to be carrying hods of lime and dirt, as loitering about with my little sister; besides, sir, the lubbers had no notions like a set of Christians, and no more manners, ay, nor a crew of hogs. However, I thought who it was for, and bore all their gibes well enough for a time, but as I wasn't quite thinking always of what I was about, the scoundrels soon got beyond all bearing, so one day they put me up about something or another, and I, just making a side out for a bend, knocked three or four of them down in a crack, one after another. Bad luck to it! 'twas all up with bricklaying, it never came to the scratch again; there was a row about it as usual, but I found it was worse to fret, so back I went to my old ways, and little Fanny seeing I took it to heart rather, did all she could to comfort me, and never said another word against the sea. As for old Woodenhead, one would think he'd done enough. Not he. What must he do soon after, but go and get my name shoved down in the militia ballot. He thought I didn't know this, but I found it out, and what for I never could think, except 'twas for spite! Well, ye see, sir, if there was anything I hated more than a bricklayer, 'twas being a soldier, and that I swore I never would be; so when I

found out that I was to join the pipeclays in a fortnight, I was well nigh mad.

“ ‘Now, then, Fan,’ said I, ‘there’s no help for it. I must go to sea.’ Well, sir, poor little Fanny!—she cried ready to break her heart, and took on so, it quite made a woman of me to see it; but knowing I’d no help for it she gave in. The next thing was to cast about for a ship. I knew there was a convoy in the Downs waiting for a fair wind, so I went off and passed under the sterns of well nigh all of them, for it came into my head that if there was a Fanny among the whole of them, I’d have her, and sure enough I picked out one at last—the Fanny of Liverpool—and aboard of her I went, and though she wasn’t the tightest looking craft, I didn’t care about that; for, says I, if I once get a board of her, Will Watch will work hard enough before a craft with that name shall look anything but snug and ship-shape; so up the side I went, and got myself a berth in no time; but I’d no sooner settled all the *nutiae*, as they call it, than I was like to drown myself for sorrow—so sad did it seem to leave everything that I liked; but ‘twas done, and I had to make the best of it. I’d been careful to ship myself in a merchantman; for ye see, sir, I bear no great love to your men-of-war; it’s easy enough to get aboard of them, but it’s not quite so clear how to get out o’ them, and my new little barky, not being bound for a term of years, but only to the West Ingees and back, I thought by that time the dust would be blown over, and little Fan and I be able to take our old rambles. In the meanwhile, there was work, life and limb, betwixt us two, to get my kit ready before the wind chopped round; and this we had to do by stealth like, for ‘twould never have done to let any one know the rig I was playing, and though ‘twas five days before I was fitted out, little Fan and I had but poor sort of pleasure of it; ‘twas heart breaking to see the way she took on; and if she hadn’t had to attend to my kit, I can’t tell how ever we should have got over it.

“ I lost no time in what I had to do, but sold all my gear and traps, to get the money that was necessary, and then was rather pushed for it; though Fan did all she could to hide this from me, and, would you think it, sir? if the little girl didn’t go and raise the cash that was wanting, on the best of her own toggery, to an old she-blood-sucker,—an

old milliner who hadn't the heart to lend a few dubs without it.

" I only came to this chanceways as it might be, and I soon rummaged up the rhino to get them back to her before I started ; and that was the saddest night I ever knew, or ever hope to know, that's more. We endeavoured to stave it off as long as we could, but 'twould come ; and even then nothing but the militia would have got me off ; for I tried to get a substitute, but they wouldn't have him ; they'd been put up to that by old Woodenhead.

" 'Twas in October, a cold stormy night, sir, blowing marlingspikes and great guns, when the little barky I had entered for, promised to send a boat for me at twelve o'clock, to wait till such time as I could make my number, bag, and baggage, and the coxswain was to come up to our cottage, and give a whistle by way of signal. Now ye see, sir, we'd pretended to go to roost as usual, in order to keep the matter quiet ; so as soon as I heard the whistle, I gave three taps on the wall for Fanny, and as her room opened into that of the old man's, she trips along through this, steals the key of the front door, and meets me waiting there with all my kit. We soon let in the coxswain, who brought one of his boat's crew, and having had a quiet glass of grog, they shouldered the traps, and made off, leaving me to follow as soon as I had said good bye to little Fanny. But Fan, dear girl, was blind with crying. She didn't try to say a word, and if she had, she wasn't able ; and whipping up her cloak and bonnet, she took hold o' my arm, though she trembled all the while,—ay, like a slight ship under a heavy sea ! Well, sir, I tried all I could to get her to have the parting over there, for the sleet was coming down so thick, she'd be wet through before she got to the beach ! But Lor, sir ! I might as well a' talked to the high-water post. She said nothing, but there she hung : crying like a babe, though she never made a sound that might wake a mouse scarcely. Seeing how 'twas to be, I moved forward, locked the door hard and fast, gave the key to Fan, and covering the poor little soul up as well as I could, off we set. When we got to the boat there was a beating sea on sure enough, though the wind was blowing off the land ; but as my baggage was shipped, I had only to step in and then hoist away. But ah, sir !—Poor little Fanny ! 'twas breaking work the way in which she clung to my neck !—and when at last I came to take her arms away,

and jump into the boat, I thought she would have gone,—but she bore it—bore it, bravely!—Poor little Fan!"

Will shaded his face with his hand.

"I often fancy, sir, I see her yet, standing on the brink of the high shingly beach, just above the white of the heavy sea that was breaking there that night. There was she, wringing her hands, as it might be, till the boat's head was put about and the lug hoisted; but no sooner did she catch sight o' the sail, than she flung her arms up in the air, and I think she must have fallen, for I looked and could not see her any longer, but I remember hearing her cry—ah, and it's never left my ears to this time; I tried, I believe, to leap out, but they held me fast, and all was one to me till the next morning. Poor little Fanny! when we may hail one another again, the Lord above only knows; but I felt directly my foot touched the boat's gunwale, 'twas all over with me,—I was done!"

"Often do I wake up thinking I feel her little arms round my neck,—but—she's—she's miles away!—God bless her and make her happier than ever her brother Will can be!"

Will bowed his head upon his knee, and I saw his whole body tremble at the fresh remembrances which this narrative of his early days called forth. Nor was I less affected.—Poor fellow!—I felt that we were at least brothers in sorrow, and though misfortune had perhaps doomed me to be the greatest loser, it would have been hard to say whose pangs were the severest;—the wounds in either case had reached the heart.

"But Will," said I after a pause, "did you remain long in the Downs?"

"Oh no, sir, by six o'clock that morning we had to trip our anchor and away down channel. But the brig never reached Barbadoes, for on the passage out, one fine night, we found her too hot to hold us. She'd taken fire somewhere in the fore hold, though we never could make out how, and was soon in a blaze from stem to stern. We couldn't manage to get her under, anyhow; so the ships of the convoy sent their boats, and I happened to jump into the one belonging to this accursed vessel. She was hard drove for want o' hands at the time, and under a different captain, and bound on a different sort o' voyage then, or I guess she'd never a' borne Will Watch's name on her books. However, we stayed among the islands some time, getting in our cargo and one thing and another, and when we came home we were bound for Hull. The skipper had promised me before I

entered with him, that when we came to pass through Dover straits I should be dropped ashore, but as he was a very good pilot himself for the channel, we went through at night, and so I missed that chance. By bad luck we carried a strong sou'-westerly gale with us, and tore away slap before it, till we let go in the Humber, near a dog-hole of a place they call Grimsby—I think. Well I was in a taking about this. I'd a very good mind to start by land back again, but then, thinks I, they'll be nabbing me on one o' the King's tenders ten to one before I get to Highbeach,—for ye see, sir, the war had just then broke out, and 'tis a pity to go squandering the little money I am to get in that sort of way, when by holding on a bit I can get a passage free: for the captain told us we were bound back for the same station, and that he should bring-to in the downs to wait for convoy again, 'and then,' says he, 'you may start home and come back to me.'"

"Now as to this coming back to him, I was noways certain of that, so I determined to get my wages when the rest of the crew were paid theirs, and then I could slip and run as I liked. Well, sir, having fixed it this way, I waited, got my money and stowed it carefully away. When about a fortnight before we were going to sail, the captain went on leave, the mate took the command, and they turned over all hands of us, save one or two, into a tub of a worn-out collier, and took our barky into one of the Hull docks, to paint and new fit, while we were kept busy about different items for the rigging, and never allowed to go aboard of her, till she slips out again all a-taunto, ready to start to sea the next day, when the tide would serve for running down the Humber.

"When we got on board, we soon found they had made another guess thing of her, with sham ports made into real ones, guns instead of quakers, and her decks below fitted up as if she were to carry cattle 'stead of a reg'lar merchantman's cargo. Well, I thought this rather rummy, but thinks I, if anything's wrong, I shall give 'em the slip in the Downs. And so 'twas scarcely daybreak next morning, when I weke at 'Hands up! anchor ahoy!' I thought of little Fanny, and right willingly turned out, though rather in a fluster when I fancied myself going back to my old berth near her. However, I jumped upon deck, and who should I run against but that villain Mackay, with a speaking trumpet in his hand, looking

over the bows, and giving his orders about the anchor;—well, I wondered who he might be, but I didn't trouble my head to think much about it; perhaps 'twas the pilot, but I looked round for our old skipper, and not seeing him I thought he must be busy below. We soon ran down the Humber, and as the breeze was fresh and fair, we stood right out to sea, and then I began to see there was another pilot on board, though Mackay didn't trouble him much, for we had the breeze right aft, and that villain astern there is the luckiest dog that ever died unhung. We never had a foul wind.—But there!—Old Nick's children have their daddy's luck!

“ Well, sir, presently the pilot jumped into his boat, and off he went, but Mackay stayed aboard. So when we saw this fellow seemed in no hurry to leave us, we began to ask among us what the skipper was doing in his cabin;—says one, ‘I have n't seen him come on board,’ ‘nor I,’ says another—‘and where's Tom, and Hardy, and Dick?’—naming some of our best shipmates who seemed absent, while we'd got, in their room, some fellows I took at first to be the crew of the pilot's boat which was astern. Would you believe it, sir? When I came to ask about it, I got to learn that our former skipper had been discharged, and this new villain Mackay had come aboard to take us, and brought with him a reg'lar gang,” lowering his voice, “of hang-dog, cut-throat-looking Tyburn villains.

“ The murder was soon out, the ship had changed owners, the most good-natured hands had been started, I was kept aboard among a few others, because, I suppose, I was a strong stout fellow, on lower wages a precious deal than I've a right to for my work, and if I stayed aboard 'twas in a ship bound for the Guinea coast for the slave-trade. I soon made up my mind to cut and run when once we anchored in the Downs, and I kept a sharp look out:—but the villain was too deep for that. However, sir, in the meantime we picked you up, past t'other side of Yarmouth, and when I saw you come aboard I couldn't make out what 'twas for, particularly when you were so thick with the old Baillie, as we used to call the scoundrel you came aboard with—”

“ What! do you mean the captain of the smack, Watch?—What was he?”

“ He?—why I remember seeing the villain at Jamaica.—He wanted a passage home, being out of employ.”—“ What

was he then?"—"Why an overseer o' one of the estates there, and a reg'lar blood-thirsty, cunning, slave-driving villain as ever lived."

"Is it possible?—and this wretch to talk of his motto being 'Honesty's the best policy!'"—the very thought of his treacherous specious perfidy made me quite sick!—"But proceed, Watch."

"Well, sir, before you spoke to me, we'd got down past the great Nore, and after that scuffle 'twas twelve o'clock before I came to, and terribly mauled I was. Directly I began to think of the matter, I went upon deck, and found we'd run through the Downs, with every stitch o' sail set which we could carry, and half a gale o' wind blowing, and this to escape being brought-to by the King's service, and having some of our hands pressed out of us. The captain, it seems, wasn't far out of it, when he thought this was likely; for as 'twas, the signal had been made to bring-to,—and three or four shots were fired to make us obey, but Mackay paid no more attention to em than if they'd been Dutch cheeses. I soon found out how 'twas going, and walking aft to the captain, I told him that the last skipper had promised I should go ashore, but that as I didn't wish the ship to wait for me, and as I must go, I'd thank him to give me a boat, set me ashore, and they might keep my pay.

"As to Captain Stewart's promise, I know nothing about that," said he. "I have no boats, nor time to spare, and if you must go ashore, there's the gangway!"—as much as to say, you may jump overboard if you like. However, sir, I was prepared for this, and I'd got all my cash about me, but although the villain had given me leave to do it, I saw him tell old Mason to watch me, and when I came to think of it, that row in the morning hadn't left me in the primest condition for swimming four or five miles in such a sea. Then, again, sir, there was you on board.—I'd found out from some of the captain's gang, that our touching at Portsmouth was all a flam, and that you were regularly sold, and I thought what would you do in such a den o' thieves? and whether 'twasn't likely, that sooner than let me get to shore and tell my story, the skipper would amuse himself by sending a musket ball through my head before I got a dozen yards from the ship?—First and last, I was in a dreadful way, but altogether, I thought it was best to take it as quietly as I could, and though 'twas worse than

death, still a chance might turn up, if the wind would only drive us into port, before we made the run of the channel.—Not a bit of it! As I said before, sir, Old Nick's children have their daddy's luck! Ever since we came out, we've never had a contrary wind nor two days' calm, and so here we are, without so much as having had to leave our course, 'cept when we wanted to avoid a sail—ay, and that morning we got you on board, we made a stretch over to the opposite coast, nobody knows why, 'cept 'twas to get out o' hail o' the smack and mislead you."

"Well, Watch, though no one can be more sorry for you than I am, yet I know not, I am sure, what I should have done had I not enjoyed your protection."

"Ah, sir! Mackay, I fear, would have settled all your troubles!"

"Yes, indeed, there is little to doubt on that score, and nothing that I can ever do, as I have often told you, can acquit me of all I owe you."

"Don't say that, sir—you owe me nothing more than what I'd a' done for any one—or for the matter o' that, what I dare say you, if you could, would have done for me."

"Most willingly—most gladly, Watch! I only hope that I may some day be put to the test."

CHAPTER VI.

IT was, I think, on the second day after my being thus made acquainted with Will's early disappointments, that I was sitting on an old barrel between decks, amusing myself with one of the books which the mercy and the ignorance of my captors had combined to spare to me, when Will Watch made his appearance. He came to tell me that a strange sail had been in sight upon the weather quarter for the last two hours; "and," added he, "our old Tyburn bird up aloft there is in a bit of a fuss, he's sherrying about upon deck with his glass in his hand—a kick to Tom and a lick to Jemmy. You can't see much more than the foot of her top-gallant sails from the masthead, and they show she's no cockle-shell.—The skipper's been aloft himself—he says she's French; but I say the sail-maker as cut those sails was never born in France. However, sir, you slip

down into the cable tier and make a snug stowage of yourself, and just forget to answer your name, if you hear yourself called, for if that should turn out one of our own true blue boys, away to windward, as sure as she wears a pennant she'll be down and aboard us to press a few hands, and then we shall see what sort o' a story the skipper will have ready. He'll be pretty desperate I expect, for your being kidnapped is near a hanging case, and so as there's no saying what may happen, you'd better take one of these little barkers," giving me a pistol; "many's the time I've found 'em useful. Mind, sir! don't you let any one come nigh you, 'cept you know what it's for; and if you should have to use it, be cool, sir; take a good aim; never be flustered in doing that, or you'll be like to waste powder and shot, and that's not ship-shape." Saying this in a careless, indifferent tone of voice, he gave me the weapon, showed me where to place it, so as to be ready at a moment's notice, and returned on deck, promising to keep a sharp look-out in our favour and report to me from time to time.

I, of course, followed Will's advice in every particular, but, at the same time, most devoutly hoped that I might be spared the necessity of shedding human blood.

From time to time Will came down to me in my retreat, with the news from deck; and I felt the tumultuous throbbing of my heart almost unbearable, as at each succeeding period he reported to me the gradual uprearing of our pursuer's sails in the distant horizon.

"I'd lay a bet of five hundred to one," said he, "that I'm right as to what that ship is: she's a British seventy-four, and Mackay begins to come into the same way of thinking; and what's more, she's a better sailer than you'd meet with every day, for she's gaining on us hand over hand; but I fear we shall hold them a stiff chase yet, for whoever built this bark knew how to clap her timbers together, and our old Tyburn bird's no fool. Villain as he is, he's a regular built sailor, as far as work goes, and he's got some smart hands in his gang; worse for us that I should have to say it!"

And, indeed, Will was right; for I could distinctly hear the voice of the hated wretch, as he bawled his orders to his crew on deck, and met each arising emergency with some new resource, that might well have done good credit to a far better cause.

“Come, my lads,” I heard him singing out to his men interlarding his dicta, by the bye, with oaths, neither few nor choice, “this ‘ll never do—we’re dropping in the chase like a bag o’ sand. Forward here, some o’ you smart fellows, as don’t want to be pressed into that prison ship astern ; let’s see the shine of a tomahawk or two. We’re too heavy by the head : we must part with our bower and kedge anchors, and keep only the sheet as a stand by.” This order I then heard followed by the trampling of feet on the forecastle, and, after a brief space, two successive plunges informed me that the cables had been cut and the anchors consigned to the deep. “So, my hearts of oak, that’s well ; she springs all the better for it.” And truth to say, my fears almost made me feel the corroboration of the villain’s words, as the ship seemed to bound more lightly over the waves, and bear me faster from those on whom now rested my chief hopes of succour.

In this feeling, however, I was not altogether deceived, for the ship rolled more heavily ; a sudden squall coming on, followed by a crash, I was enabled to ascertain, from the shouting, that we had carried away the maintop-gallant mast. After a correspondent puff of swearing on the part of the captain, he gave the orders necessary towards the getting a new one in its place, which they soon turned out from among the booms, and sent aloft with considerable expedition, much to the annoyance of Will and myself.

“Hey, there ! Charlton,” I heard him bellowing, “see that the carpenter’s adzes are got upon deck, and let’s have all the wedges out from round the masts.—Forward, again here, two or three of ye—these two forecastle guns must go overboard. This is no time to be lumbered up with cold iron ! They’ll be o’ no more use than a dirty mop, if once we let that thumping fellow come down upon us with his long thirty-twos. Here, Jackson—how may tons o’ water can you spare out o’ the hold ? Jump down and see, and start away all ye can for your life. Rig the pumps my boys, and look sharp about it ; short allowance is better than a King’s cruiser. We’ll soon pump it out o’ her, and see whether we can’t make ‘em take leg bail.”

While the clack and clang consequent upon these energetic measures, was going on above me, I was listening with the most intense anxiety, and praying fervently that such execrable villainy might not be allowed to escape unpunished. That

this would, however, be the case, there certainly did seem great reason to fear ; for it was soon evident that the ship's speed was increased by this lightening of her load, though certainly not to any very extent ; but still the bare idea of such being the fact was sufficient. Fervently did I hope that the masts, so much loosened by the withdrawal of their wedges, might yield to the powerful breeze now blowing, and depart over the side—but no ; they creaked, and swung, and wavered, but their shrouds and stays held them fast enough, despite of their having been deprived of the fulcrum, as it were, of the deck.

It was now about five or six o'clock, and all the above orders having been duly executed for some time, the captain continued to regard his pursuer with an eye of redoubled vigilance, as debating whether enough had been done to secure him from the reach of his powerful enemy, or whether he should still resort to still more extreme measures. It would appear that he held the latter course to be the best, since he directed two more guns to be cast overboard, and getting together all the saws in the ship, set the crew to work, cutting through every third beam fore and aft, besides many of the carlines. In addition to this, he ordered the laniards of the stays to be eased off, and made the men go aloft and haul up buckets of water, which they dashed over the sails. These commands certainly produced a great effect, but no sooner had they been put into execution than I thought we must have gone to pieces. The motion of the ship was extreme ; she creaked, and cracked, until I fancied I heard her breaking up at every sound. In addition to this we now began to leak, but the pumps were brought into play to counterbalance this evil, and certainly never was there a captain or a crew who exerted themselves more to escape capture, than did Mackay and his men that night.

In the mid-t of these labours, however, thus entailed upon his "gang," he did not forget the grand stimulus so dear to a sailor, but served out to them their usual allowance of grog at six o'clock, with an assurance that if they "clapped on with a will," they should have the main-brace spliced at nine—in other words, receive an extra quantity at that hour.

It was at this juncture that Will again came down to me to report progress. On my asking, however, whether the stranger gained on us fast, he shook his head, saying, "No, sir, that

Mackay's no griffin—I'd lay my life he was brought up aboard a man o' war. He's knocking nigh fourteen knots an hour out o' this craft, and 'tisn't in the merchant service they learn to play such tricks with a ship as 'll make her do that. However, ye see, sir, I've just come down to put you up to a wrinkle, which I can't manage altogether by myself."

"What is it? You may deperd on me."

"Wait a bit, sir; as things go now, ye see, 'tis a chance but we leave the old seventy-four to keep her own company; but as that isn't quite the thing for you and me, we must see what we can do to prevent it. 'Tis a dangerous sort of a trick, but 'nothing go, nothing gain,' you know; so we must take our chance o' that."

"With all my heart, Will."

"That's right, sir. There isn't much for you to do. I'll take the worst part o' it. But ye see here, sir," unbuttoning his pea-jacket and producing three strong fishing-lines of some length, "I want you to set-to, heart and soul, and lay these lines up into a small hawser-twist."

Transported at the idea of being in any way useful towards the accomplishment of our deliverance, I seized my task with avidity, and commenced working away at it before I even knew to what end my work was destined. I very soon, however, found that it would be quite out of the question to lay up in the given time so great a length of cord, and was in no slight perplexity when I heard some one stealing in towards my retreat, and Will's voice demanding in a whisper how I succeeded.

Having communicated to him the cause of my present dilemma, he soon devised another method of proceeding, which, he said, would answer equally well for his purpose, and which I found much more easily and speedily to be managed. This was by seizing, or banding, as it were, the fishing lines together, with small twine, at every yard's length. My task being finished, I extinguished my light as he had desired me, and quietly awaited the pipe to grog at nine o'clock.

The time seemed most dolefully tedious, but at last the bell struck, the joyful summons to the grog-tub was given, and, punctual to his time, down slipped Will.—"Where are ye, sir?"

"Here, Will, am I."

"Give us your hand, sir. So—now where's your reel of line? Have ye got it all ready, wound up, and clear o' knots?"

"All right, Will; here it is."

"That's he, sir; give it me, I'll stow him under my jacket; and now bear a hand for your life, and follow me on deck, before any of these villains come away with their grog, else, if they chance to get a sight of ye, it may be awkward."

Following Will as closely as possible, we soon stood npon the forecastle, screened by the swelling mainsail from the observation of the only man on deck beside ourselves—Mackay—who was steering at the wheel.

Stealing on tiptoe, Will beckoned me to follow him to the larboard side of the deck, where, jumping up on the bulwark under the fore-rigging, he lifted me in, placed me by him, and then slipping down outside into the forechains,* again took me in his arms, landing me in a safe position. Even this, however, seemed to me to be a frightful station, what with the extreme motion of the ship, and the velocity with which she darted through the tumbling mass of foam and fire that glittered beneath me.

"Now, sir," said Will, "you must hold on taut to these shrouds, and nothing can happen t'ye; for all that we can do to stop this barky from running away so fast is this—" taking up three sounding leads, weighing somewhat less than thirty pounds, and making them fast to one end of the little line on which I had been employed. "Now, sir, clap your feet upon these leads to keep them fast from rolling overboard, while you hold your own with your hands, and stay here till I come back to you. If t' happens that anything should come amiss to me, don't you say a word, but make off below as fast as ye can, and take your chance for the best."

The last piece of advice alarmed and confounded me, and I was about to demand an explanation, and implore Will not to hazard his life in any wild undertaking, when to my horror I saw him make a spring as if overboard; but seeing him suddenly arrested in mid-air, I concluded that he had caught hold of a rope, and in this conjecture I was right, for while I, trembling with fear, beheld him dangling over the awful abyss beneath, he gave a sudden jerk, threw up his legs into a position horizontal with his body, and crossing his feet over the same rope

* The slight projection from the side to which the rigging is fastened.

to which he was already attached by his hands, he darted out from the ship with his face upwards, until he reached the spritsail* yard-arm, to one of the braces of which he had been clinging. Having stayed at this point during the brief space necessary to make fast the other end of our little cable, he returned in a similar manner and rejoined me, not a little delighted in his safety.

“Now, sir, hand me those leads ; I’ll just make fast this little bit of a laniard and lower ’em gently overboard, and if they make her steer a bit more easy, I’m a Dutchman.” Accordingly, Will having eased his sounding leads into the water, let them go astern, and then helping me in-board as gently as he could, made me stow myself away among the booms till the lights were put out below, when, by his advice, I slunk away to my hammock, having been previously advised by him not to undress myself, and “keep my weather eye awake.”

In the meanwhile, however, Will’s stratagem answered completely. The night was cloudless but very dark, and this rendered it impossible to observe our slight towing-line from in-board. Its great length prevented the leads from rising to the surface, until so far astern that they were lost in the foam of the ship’s wake, while the breeze, and a very powerful one was blowing, being a little on the larboard quarter, the drag of such a weight on the spritsail yard-arm acting as a forcible lever, necessarily gave the ship a tendency to come round to the wind. This was not on the instant perceived, and after trying in vain to account for such a circumstance, it was naturally enough set down to the alteration produced in the ship’s trim, by the efforts that had been made to lighten her. To counteract this tendency then, they were obliged to keep the helm a turn to windward, and by the rudder thus producing an impediment to leeward, added to the obstruction already effected by our leads on the weather bow, so much lessened her way, that from fourteen knots an hour she fell off to eleven and a half. The result of such a deterioration of the vessel’s speed was soon obvious. The sails of the pursuing ship rose rapidly in the horizon astern, and half an hour before daybreak Will was at my side to communicate these glad tidings.

How thankful did I feel ! and yet I scarcely dared to hope that the issue would be favourable. What I did, however,

* The spar which crosses the bowsprit.

was to jump out of my hammock right quickly, and proceed on deck. The scene that awaited me there was indeed sublime, and made as deep an impression on my mind as any which I ever remember to have witnessed. And oh ! the joy I felt in contemplating it.

To windward in the East, the deep blue of the sky had begun to be broken by the faintest tinge of light, while before its pale silvery line of gray—the herald of the day's approach—the stars seemed counselling the night to withdraw, and, like true sycophants of royalty, to show their queen by their example the path to retreat.

In the middle of this dim gleam, I beheld a dark pyramidal mass uprearing itself ; but scarcely had I time to conjecture what this might be, when with the most beautiful effect which it is possible to conceive, a sudden gleam of flame bursting from its base seemed to spread itself over the whole space of sea and sky ; the plunging of a shot about half a mile to windward, and the heavy sullen sound succeeding, announced that our pursuer had commenced firing.

Looking on the instant towards the quarter-deck to see how this summons would be received by Mackay, I saw him standing by the wheel with upturned eyes ; momentarily expecting to see some of his spars go overboard, or it might have been ransacking that receptacle and engenderer of guilty thoughts—his brain, for some new resource against approaching fate. If thus employed, it was in vain. His ship had been beaten on her best point of sailing. All that ingenuity could devise or art effect, had already been done by him to escape, but hitherto, at least, it had been fruitless.

Haggard, indeed, did he look with the long and anxious watching of the past night, and now the morning found him, desperate as crime and hopelessness could make him. The men too, with pale faces and muttering fearful curses to themselves, thronged to the gangway to gaze on the pursuing ship, rendered with every succeeding instant more distinctly majestic, as the gradual increase of light revealed the clear noble outline of her sails, and general symmetry of proportion.

For a quarter of an hour after the first gun, no further notice was taken of us than by her continuing to bear gradually down. At the end of this time, one—two—three—successive flashes again lit up the scene around us with uncommon grandeur and beauty ; nor was that all—the flash was succeeded by a sudden

tear—and crack went some of the canvas aloft, rending into strips.—I looked up ; a ball had passed through the leach of the weather fore-topmast-studding sail, and the wind following up the mischief which the shot had begun, in two seconds reduced the sail to rags. The captain regarded the spectacle with a mingled look of fury and despair, which would beggar all description. He uttered no sound, but stooping down, as I thought to hide his countenance, he patted the head of his spaniel which was sitting at his feet ; while I heard him say to the helmsman in a husky voice, “Take that poor creature below, and tie her up out of the way of them Devil’s messengers,” meaning the shots ; after which little trait of kindness, a kindness of the only sort to which I ever knew him to be accessible, he took the steerage into his own hand, and cried out in a sullen voice, “All hands shorten sail ! Aft there, Roberts, and hoist the red ensign.”

The studding-sails were now by his orders successively taken in, and the top gallant-sails clued up, when the ship’s canvas being sufficiently reduced, he rounded her to the wind, and hove the main-top-sail aback. After this he called his mate aft and gave some orders, which the latter executed by placing several of the crew in different stations.

I, in the meanwhile, had been lying *perdu*, as it were, “among the pots,” wondering not a little that he had never asked for one whose existence so strongly threatened his own. As, however, he seemed scarcely to remember that I was on board, I could only conclude that events of greater moment had driven such a circumstance from his recollection ; not a little did I rejoice that such had been the case, for I was not altogether without some apprehensions as to what might be his conduct should he suddenly turn his attention towards me. At one thing I confess I was considerably surprised, namely, the readiness with which he seemed inclined at the last to give himself up to his fate ;—but of this hereafter.

The seventy-four, for such, as Will had pronounced her, she now appeared to be, came rapidly up with us ; nor since her last summons had she fired another shot. Before day had well broken, she too had shortened sail, and hove-to at the distance of six hundred yards upon our quarter. Having us now pretty safe, she lowered down one of her barges, and manning it, sent a lieutenant and a midshipman to board us.

How wildly my heart beat at this sight ! Scarcely did I

permit the lieutenant to ascend from the boat and gain a footing on the quarter-deck, where the captain was waiting to receive him, than I rushed forward, threw myself between them and claimed the officer's protection. At the sight of me, Mackay, who before seemed cowed beneath the weight of his own guilt, now became transported with the most deadly rage.

Stepping aside, and swinging round his head an iron bar,—a monkey-tail which he had hitherto kept behind his back, I suppose for the demolition of the lieutenant,—he struck directly at me. Shrinking myself, however, into as small a space as possible, I darted on one side to escape the blow, which thus fell upon one of Mackay's own “gang;” and so effectually was the poor fellow's skull cleft, that he dropped instantaneously dead upon the deck. Incensed at this outrage, the lieutenant's sword was in a moment drawn, and pointed at the captain's throat.

“Sway away the main yard,” roared Mackay to his crew, who, it seems, had been ready primed for this occasion, and now surrounded the king's officer so closely, that it was impossible for him to get at the chief object of his vengeance.

The captain flew to the gangway, where one of his men was opposing the entrance of the barge's bowman, and thrusting at the seaman with all his strength, the blow hurled the poor fellow back into his boat; he at the same time knocking down two of the boat's crew, who were springing up to their officer's assistance. Under these three were thus buried the boathooks that had held the barge fast alongside, while the captain's order for swinging the main yard having been instantly obeyed, the ship had, in a few seconds, gathered sufficient way to drop them ten or twenty yards astern, where all their pulling availed them not to regain their former position.

No sooner, however, did Will Watch, who was on the weather gangway, hear the scuffle to leeward, than he sprang to our assistance; but not until the barge alongside had been detached by the attack of Mackay. The last-named personage, looking round for me, encountered Will face to face.

Between these two, a desperate struggle now began. Size was in favour of the captain rather, but youth, strength, and activity were possessed by Will Watch in a greater degree. The crew fancying, however, that the latter had met more than his match, seemed to direct all their animosity against the lieutenant; who, most gallantly combating with his sword the dis-

proportioned host assailing him on all sides with every species of weapon, was being slowly borne by his foes to the taffrail, though every backward step he took was followed by a stream of blood. One fellow only, it seems, thought of me, as I lay alone half-stunned, among the guns, where I had been thrown in the scuffle. Seeing this wretch approach—a drawn clasp-knife in his hand—I suppose with the kindly purpose of despatching me, I sprang upon one knee, and, as the villain stooped down, drew Will's pistol from my breast, and presenting it at his—fired.

Not until I felt myself borne down by his falling body, and weltering in his blood, did I know what I had done. Then it was, I suppose, the dash of the Black Douglas first showed itself in my disposition. Jumping on my feet, I seized the first object that presented itself as a weapon of offence, and looked round to see who should be my next assailant.

To my horror, I was just in time to behold the unfortunate lieutenant hurled overboard from our weather quarter, when the villains who had perpetrated this outrage, made a rush in a body towards me. My days are over, thought I, as with all the fortitude I could summon I awaited my approaching fate. To my utter surprise, I beheld them one and all, with terror in their countenances, dart down the companion ladder to the deck below. Thus left to myself, I endeavoured to discover the cause to which I owed my safety, and beheld the seventy-four, her enormous spread of canvas distended by the powerful breeze, tearing across the waves towards us, like some infuriated giant of the deep, now within so short a distance on our quarter as to form, without any exaggeration, a sight at once terrific and sublime.

The object of fear from which the slaver's men had fled, was sufficiently obvious. Swarming on her forecastle, her bowsprit, and fore-shrouds, appeared her grim-visaged crew, their naked cutlasses in their hands, ready to pour upon our devoted decks.

“Will Watch!” I shouted, in the utmost despair, believing that he must be lying wounded, or perhaps even dead, near me, and that I alone was on deck. No one answered me, and I, scarcely knowing what I did or what to do, sprang over to windward, where the first object that struck my eye, was Will, locked in a death struggle with Mackay. The expression of either countenance was horrible to behold!—Their eyes seemed

starting from their heads,—Will's as if with the fell intensity of his rage, Mackay's from the agony of his despair! The activity and strength of Watch had, as I expected, told well in the encounter with his bulkier opponent; who, with his back bent round upon the steerage-wheel, his feet entangled with its ropes, his head jammed in between its spokes, and his face rapidly growing purple from the suffocating grasp which Will maintained upon his throat, seemed like the Bengal tiger in the strangling embrace of the more slight but deadly boa!

“Port your helm! Port—hard a port!” shouted a hundred voices from the approaching seventy-four—their hoarse accents of command mingling with the roar of waters, the crashing of spars, and an infinity of other sounds.—“Watch! Watch!” I exclaimed, frantically clasping my hands, ignorant of what to do, and unable to withdraw my gaze from the horrid struggle going on before me. Will replied not a word, but scowled upon his foe with eyes that only seemed to regret they had not the power, as fully as the wish, to slay. Without loosening his deadly hold, he looked around for some speedier mode of destruction; then, catching a sight of the approaching line-of-battle ship, something with the speed of lightning appeared to flash across his mind, as with one hand he rapidly untied a silk handkerchief from his waist. At this moment a sudden crash seemed to shiver the vessel into a thousand atoms, and the shock threw me with a violent blow upon the deck. I looked up—the figure-head of the seventy-four was directly over me—her cutwater was grinding us into the yeast of waves beneath.

“Watch—Will Watch! for mercy's sake”—but, before I could utter another word, some one lifted me in his arms, and springing on the sinking bulwark of our prison-ship, caught hold of one of the man-of-war's ropes, hanging from above, and by this means seated himself upon the protruding muzzle of one of her guns. Frightfully insecure as was such a station, I did indeed feel thankful for attaining even that, and looking round to see who had thus resued me, found, to my inexpressible joy, that I was again indebted to my friend Will. Panting from the deadly contest in which he had been so lately engaged, he was only able to point to the scene on the deck of our late tyrants below. I shudder even to recall it. Writhing upon the steerage-wheel, to which his neck was bound by Will's silk handkerchief, and struggling in vain to get free—

his blackened and distorted face the image of despair and guilt, and his hand uplifted in appeal to those to whom he had taught any lesson but that of mercy—I beheld Mackey whirled head downwards by a sudden movement of his ship's rudder, which left no part of him visible, save his feet, struggling in the air. In the next instant the seventy-four, like some vindictive and relentless monster of the deep, seemed to ride over the crushed decks of the slaver with her stem; and while her crew were starting from their hiding places, with ghastly looks of horror, she disappeared swiftly from our view beneath. A mass of wreck amid the foaming surge—a slight perceptible grating of the keel for a second or two over the sinking and dissevered hull, was all that seemed to evidence the fact to our senses; and the line-of-battle ship sprang on, upon the blue bosom of each succeeding wave, as uninterruptedly as if, within a few brief seconds, she had not despatched so many human beings to their irrevocable doom!—What that was to be it was indeed awful to consider!

CHAPTER VII.

FOR a few minutes' space after the dreadful catastrophe recorded in the preceding chapter, not a breath seemed to be drawn on board the two-decker, nor was the slightest sound heard, save the continuous rushing of the dark, free waves beneath the heedless prow. The suddenness of the event seemed to leave its spectators horror-struck; and then the looks of both officers and crew turned to Will and myself, the first of whom they seemed to regard with as much admiration as surprise at the avoiding of so imminent a danger. On reaching the lower deck, and feeling myself sound and safe in limb and body, I could hardly contain my joy—my thankfulness, so great was my escape from everything that I considered most horrible.

The officer into whose quarters I had thus unceremoniously intruded gave Will and myself in charge to a midshipman, to be led up to the quarter-deck for examination by the captain. While on our road, we were stared at as if beings of a new order

The captain was on the poop, bailing his barge to make haste and bring on board their wounded lieutenant, whom they had succeeded in picking up. This finished, he came jumping down upon the quarter-deck to interrogate his new passengers. He was a short, sharp little man, but did not appear to have an ill-natured expression of countenance. He was stout in person, and as singular in aspect as he afterwards proved to be eccentric in character. He appeared to me to wear no particular symbol of authority, which might show the superiority of his rank over that of his fellow officers around him, but was simply dressed in a black glazed hat and undress jacket, with a pair of rough blue cloth trousers.

“Where are they? Where are they? Where, where, where, where?” exclaimed Captain Burgos, jumping down the poop ladder, and speaking as rapidly as it was possible for him to enunciate, “the dogs—the wretches—the villains—where are they?”—I began to fear. “Here, here, here; what are you—who are you—what have you been doing—how came you aboard that craft?—eh? eh? Come, come, make haste, sir. What, what, what have ye got to say for yourselves?” looking first at me and then at Watch.

Though not a little confused at this singular address and half adduced charge, and that before the whole crowd of officers, pressing round as near as they could, to hear the examination, I summoned courage, from the consciousness of having done no wrong, and commenced my tale.

I said that I was not a part of the crew of the vessel they had just sunk, but had been kidnapped and ill treated by the captain, plundered of my property, and detained against my will; that Will Watch was in the last particular a fellow sufferer; and that, finally, it was by his exertions and ingenuity alone, they had been enabled to come up with their chase. I then briefly recapitulated the heads of my story, which there was no slight inclination I thought to disbelieve, nor was this incredulity dispelled until I mentioned the name of Admiral Fluke, and the fact of his being my friend.

“Fluke, Fluke, Fluke, my boy! d’ye know Fluke? and as good an old officer he is, as ever hoisted his own flag, or hauled down an enemy’s:—capital fellow, Fluke!” On hearing this, I produced the kind old veteran’s letter, which, with my father’s manuscript, I had never ceased, since my fever, to carry about my person, and presented the former for the

captain's perusal. This, as soon as he had read, he gave to his first lieutenant, and then clapped me on the back, saying, "Fine lad—brave boy; fine lad—that is, when I say fine lad, you know—I don't mean anything of the sort. I dare say ye're as arrant a rogue as ever lived, but still, ye see, I'll be your friend—d'ye comprehend?" Truth to say, I never comprehended a speech less, and such a feeling, I doubt not, my looks expressed, though my lips did not. Of this, however, he took no further notice than to give me an extra pat, which made my shoulders tingle again, while he said to the first lieutenant—"Ay, ay, we'll sharpen him up, sharpen him up in no time! Fluke's an old friend of mine, a good officer, a regular good fellow, and as he wants the lad to be in the service, d'ye see, Mr. Clueline, he can't be better off than where he is; we have a midshipman's vacancy, you may as well clap his name down in the books. That is, you know, when I say in the books, of course I don't mean anything of the sort—but still, ye see, ye may as well give him the rating, d'ye comprehend?"

"Ay, ay, sir, I understand; he shall be borne at once, and we'll get him victualled for to-day's breakfast," replied the first lieutenant, who seemed to translate the idiomatic and contradictory orders of his superior, with a facility which led me at once to conclude, that what appeared so strange to me, was but an idle habit in the captain—the idiosyncrasy of his discourse, as it were.

The ship in which I had now, in so strange and unexpected a manner, become an officer, was one returning from the Jamaica station, and now that she had ascertained the character, by ending the existence, of the "strange sail," she resumed the course which the hope of a prize, and the obstinacy of its flight, had temporarily interrupted.

On remarking to some of the officers on the severity of the punishment which Captain Burgos had adopted, in running down a vessel before he was fully acquainted with her misdemeanours, I was informed that such treatment was by no means meditated on the part of his Majesty's cruiser, but that it was owing to the slaver having suddenly run up into the wind, before the seventy-four could avoid her. This account was also confirmed by Will Watch, who told me, that in his struggle with Mackay they had inadvertently given the helm a turn to starboard, by means of the wheel, which, acting in con-

junction with our leads towing astern, had produced the fatal accident, by laying the slaver athwart-hawse of the two-decker.

The captain and first lieutenant seeming to take a peculiar interest in Will Watch, asked him to volunteer, offering for the present the rating of able seaman, with a promise of a better berth on the earliest opportunity. This Will very wisely accepted, knowing that his refusal would only be followed by compulsion.

The first brief feeling of courtesy due to a stranger in distress having soon worn off, I was made to feel that my ordeal was not to be forgiven me, because my kit had been run down. Sundry and tormenting were the tricks which I had to undergo from the numerous young fry on board, who all piqued themselves on being experienced hands.

Recalling, however, my father's advice, I endeavoured to take everything as it was meant—in fun, and this soon procured for me several friends among the older members of the mess. One youngster, however, there was, about a year older than myself, who seemed to have fixed on me as a butt, and he had nicknamed me Sawney, and never addressed me without ridiculing and greatly exaggerating my northern accent. In some of his pranks he had even gone so far as to get the feelings of the older members turned against him. Arran, said they, half in humour, why don't you give him a thrashing?

From this I considered that my forbearance had been sufficiently shown, and I determined accordingly to strike a blow for independence. The opportunity for this was not long in occurring; we were seated at the breakfast-table one morning, my tormentor, Mr. Giles, being next to me, when he suddenly pronounced my name in so loud a tone, that I quickly turned my head towards him to see what he wanted. In an instant I felt my cheek severely lacerated by a fork, on which Giles had stuck a piece of fat pork, covered with mustard, and which he had so held, that I must have infallibly struck it in turning to answer his call.

The smarting pain from the wound thus given made my blood tingle with rage, further augmented by the boy's saying at the same time, "Sawney! ye'll no' be getting such a sop as this every day, on t'other side of Tweed."

"No, sir," I replied, starting up on the instant, and using my handkerchief to efface the marks of this rude jest, "I'll not

deny that my associates in that country are ignorant of the method of offering such a morsel in such a manner, but should you ever cross the border, and get so far out of your sphere as to be among gentlemen, you'll soon learn how such an obligation is to be returned to you," striking the offender, at the same time, a severe blow in the face.

A shout was instantly raised, a ring formed, and the battle fought out. I was far from coming off scathless, neither indeed did my adversary; but his having provoked the contest by an act which presupposed his superiority, told much against him, and he was forced to think, though he would not admit the fact, that I was too nearly his match to be wantonly provoked.

This battle seemed to establish my neutrality and existence among these petty states. It did not prove the last to be sure, but it was the most severe, and thenceforward, like other fish, I was allowed to hang by my own tail, though I nevertheless determined to lose no time in acquiring as much of the English idiom and accent as I could, in order to render permanent my present suppression of that odious appellative, *Sæwney*. In these efforts I was aided by one of my new messmates, by whose manner and appearance I was greatly taken, and with whom I contracted the most sincere friendship,—the remembrance of which will ever revive in my mind sensations of the most exquisite, but, alas! most melancholy pleasure.

His name was Miles—Grahame Miles. In age he was about a year in advance of myself; and a finer-hearted creature, or more promising young man, I think, it was never my happiness to meet, or misfortune to lose. He was the youngest but one of four sons, and having been sent to sea at an age earlier than my own, he was of course more accustomed to the ways of the world, but in return I possessed a corresponding advantage over him, inasmuch as infinitely more pains had been taken with my education.

The first thing that drew Miles and myself together, was the battle just mentioned: we felt that in our mother-country we had a common tie; for though an Englishman himself, Miles's favourite parent was a descendant of the celebrated and glorious James Grahame of Montrose, on whose heroic deeds and sufferings my young friend delighted to dwell, and from whom he derived his Christian name.

In return for any little information I was able to afford to

my new friend, he undertook to instruct me in my various duties, and the best method of performing them. I read also with him constantly, and laboured hard and effectually to acquire a less perceptible accentuation. I soon found myself enabled to execute all that was required of me with tolerable credit and comfort; and the more good-natured of the officers seemed inclined to befriend me, and the rest I easily contrived to avoid.

The latter, indeed, owing to the kind care of Captain Burgos—who, with all his eccentricities, was a most excellent officer—were kept in such a degree of order as prevented them from greatly molesting their inferiors; and in this credit the first lieutenant had also a considerable share: but I was informed that we were a ship peculiarly fortunate, and were considered to be in a high state of order; but that in others where a different disposition actuated the commanders, duty was known to be carried on in a way that made life scarcely bearable; and of this species of tyranny many most execrable instances were given me.

Blessing my stars that I had been thus fortunate, I determined, as far as I could, to secure the good offices of those in power, so that I might continue where I was.

Among the many oddities of the captain was one which I thought extremely droll, and for which I learnt he was much noted, not only on board, but throughout the navy generally. I had not been on board a week, when it became my turn to keep the afternoon watch. At four o'clock, this duty being over, I was relieved, and I remained talking to Miles—my relieving officer—until nearly five o'clock. Presently the captain made his appearance from under the poop cabin; we all raised our hats.—With his hands in his breeches' pockets he proceeded by the starboard gangway, round the forecastle, as was his invariable custom at this hour, returned along the larboard side of the quarter-deck, traversed the poop, and halted once more on the exact spot from which he had set out.

“Who’s the officer of the afternoon watch?”

“I, sir!” answered a lieutenant named Heath.

“Got a knife?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Who’s your youngster?”

“Robins and Seymour, sir, and Arran.”

“ Got—got—got a knife ? ” turning to me.

“ Say yes,” whispered Miles.

“ Yes, sir,” I replied.

“ Robins ! Seymour ! ” calling the other midshipmen of the watch.

“ Sir, sir,” replied they, starting up in various directions.

“ Got a knife ? Got a knife ? ”

“ Yes, sir.” “ Yes, sir.”

“ Then follow me, ye dogs.”

Wondering what in the name of fortune was to follow this singular address, I brought up the rear of the file now treading in the captain’s steps. Knives, thought I, and only the officers of our watch ! On what bloody-minded purpose can he be bent ? But it was soon made evident ; for having entered his cabin, Seymour, who went before, whispered me to close the door.

“ Now, my boys,” said Captain Burgos, “ out steel ! ”

In an instant my three companions, with their commander at their head, whipped out of their pockets, each man a large clasp knife, which they opened and grasped with a celerity which somewhat surprised, and I must confess not a little alarmed, me ; more especially when after performing this feat themselves, they turned their gaze on me with a meaning which I could not comprehend, until the captain repeated his demand, “ got a knife ? ”

“ Yes, sir,” I quickly replied, fumbling at the same time with some confusion in my pocket, and producing at length a small penknife ; on observing this, my watchmates fixed their eyes upon the captain’s countenance, to take their lead from him, and began to smile ; while he bursting into a loud laugh, exclaimed, “ Haha, ha ! rather green, boy ! But, come, come, let’s fall to,” and hauling a semicircular table towards a spacious safe in the fore part of the cabin, the little man seated himself very comfortably, and after seeing us ranged around in regular standing order, according to our seniority, unlocked the safe, pulling from its recesses a leg of cold roast pork, and placing it by his side on the table, said, “ Sway away ! ”

He had no sooner uttered these words, than he seized the devoted joint between the fingers and thumb of his left hand, then using the clasp knife in his right with great dexterity, quickly carved two large slices himself, and pushed it towards the lieutenant. While this officer was helping himself after a

similar fashion, the captain took from the aforesaid safe the bread-basket and salt cellars, from both of which he helped himself freely, eating the meat meanwhile in a most primitive and digitory manner. After one or two mouthfuls, he looked round to the servant who was standing behind, and said, "Steward, wine—water."

This laconic order was the signal for that servant to place on the table two large decanters of wine and five tumblers, together with some water. Captain Burgos filling one of the glasses half full, pushed the decanters towards us, saying, "Wine—gentlemen," and then with a slight bow finished his potation. In the meantime my own messmates seemed perfectly *au fait*. They attacked the cold joint with a keenness of knife and appetite most vivifying to behold, and which by the way might have surprised a stranger, who had seen them dine at twelve o'clock. I on the contrary beheld these aboriginal operations with an air of bewilderment, much better conceived than described. Soon by the course of rotation it came to my turn to help myself. Seeing that I hesitated, the captain, who had finished his first modicum, called out in a peculiar tone as he winked his eye to the rest, "Come, come, youngster, help yourself—help yourself—and pass it on—pass it on."

Waiving my own wants, I attempted to obey the latter part of the captain's injunction by disobeying the former. Such a proceeding, however, he would not allow: pushing back the dish, he said, "Come, come, cut away, cut away." This, then, though much confused, I attempted to do with my penknife, but seeing how inadequate this was to its task, Seymour offered me his more appropriate weapon. "No—no, he shan't have it—against rules, 'gainst rules," shouted out Captain Burgos, preventing me from availing myself of the kind offer. Reduced to an extremity, and desperate from seeing that I kept the rest of this native party waiting, I made a tremendous lunge and succeeded—but alas, it was only in cutting my finger, and breaking short off, in the joint, the frail blade with which I had attempted to carve.

In an instant the tempting viand was abstracted from before my hungry sight, and a loud laugh raised at my expense. This last circumstance was a relief to me; who looked for nothing less than a loss of temper on the part of him who thus played the host in so singular a manner. It was not so, however;

and in the way that I have described, the meat went round and round among us, passing each time with the most perfect security my bladeless handle.

At length, when scarcely anything remained but the bone, and the others had unanimously declared themselves satisfied with the carnivorous portion of the feast, the captain seemed to relent, and turning to Seymour, said, “Now, boy, lend him a knife. That is, you know, when I say lend him a knife, I don’t mean anything of the sort. A fellow so green as to come here with a penknife, deserves to have nothing to eat at all; but still, ye see, lend him something to scrape the bone with, d’ye comprehend?”

“Ay, ay, sir,” replied Seymour, putting his more useful weapon into my hand, while I, having now sufficiently had my cue, lost no time in showing Captain Burgos that I was not more refined than my watchmates.

“Ay, ay,” said he, winking to Heath, “we’ll sharpen him up yet before he gets to the old admiral. Won’t come here with a penknife again! Devilish lucky to get any.—The king’s health, gentlemen,” pushing the bottle towards us, and then after another tumbler half full of wine, “So what have we here? Some plum pudding!”

The last mentioned delicacy being duly brought forth, was by the host cut into slices and duly discussed, a small share only being left for me, to contribute to the said sharpening up of my faculties, which my superior seemed so kindly intent on achieving. Cheese succeeded to the pudding, and was followed by another bumper of wine, which completed the repast. Then with his hands comfortingly crossed and his head slightly, but reverentially bent, he pronounced grace.

Of this I believe, short as it was, no words were ever distinguished more than the last two, which were—“had enough.” He then gave us a nod, said, “Good evening, gentlemen, thanks for your company,” and retired into his after-cabin, while we departed as we entered. On regaining the quarter-deck, I found Miles had not yet finished his watch. “Tell me, my good fellow,” said I, “surely Captain Burgos must be mad!”

“Not quite,” replied my friend, “he is only cracked in general, and simply deranged on some heads in particular; this being one of them. He never dines otherwise than as you see.”

“ But what can be his motive ? Surely not avarice ! ”

“ Most decidedly not ; for though evidently a poor man, he is never guilty of any of those little meannesses which so decidedly mark the niggard. He will frequently, on first coming to sea, give away to his ship’s company a couple of sheep at time ; when otherwise they would have nothing but the ship’s allowance of salt meat. It is true he may thus avoid the expenses of a table, kept as is usual with officers of his rank ; but if so, it is to gratify no propensities of his own, though I rather think the motive may be found in the fact of his having a large family.”

“ But still, Miles, it is so extravagantly singular ! ”

“ True, but so are all his actions ; not another captain in the fleet, I suppose, would dare to do half the things that he does, and that almost without comment.”

“ But surely he must be laughed at for this mode of dining ! How does he invite brother officers ? ”

“ Not he, he never thinks of such a thing. Any one who chooses to come, he says, is welcome to what he calls ‘ a Spartan meal.’ And faith ! he once gave them such a capital proof of this, that he has been seldom plagued since.”

“ Ah ! what was it ? ”

“ Simply this : some time since we were under the orders of Sir ———, who, having heard of the odd manner in which Burgos dines, laid a bet with his flag captain and some other officers, that he would “ knock a sit-down dinner out of him,” and accordingly at his next grand turn out, the admiral said, ‘ Burgos, how d’ye like the Briton ? ’—he’d not been appointed to us very long —‘ does she work well ? Eh ? Got her in good order, I dare say ! I should like to walk over her, what say you ? I’ll come aboard to-morrow, and take my dinner with you.’ ”

“ ‘ Thank ye, admiral ! most happy to have the honour. That is’ —muttering in a low tone to himself, ‘ when I say happy to have the honour—mean nothing of the sort—honour of admiral’s dinner-company’s a troublesome sort of a thing—but—still—still— ye comprehend me, sir,—in a louder tone, ‘ nothing will give me greater pleasure.’ ”

“ ‘ Well, thank ye, thank ye, Burgos. What hour d’ye sit down ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Oh five, admiral, five punctually, dinner’s an awkward thing, you know, Sir ———, to wait for anybody.’ ”

“ Now whether the skipper had learnt in the course of the evening that there was a bet depending on the subject, I know not ; but precisely at five on the ensuing day, Sir —— came on board and found Captain Burgos in waiting on the quarter-deck. Having received his visitor in due form, the captain started on his usual round, by the gangway, forecastle, waist, quarter-deck, and poop.

“ ‘ What’s this round for, Burgos ? ’ demanded Sir ——, who’d been put up to all the skipper’s ways beforehand.

“ ‘ Always take this little bit of a step out before dinner, Sir ——, to get an appetite. That is, when I say an appetite, not at all, because I never have an appetite, never had one, never could eat a morsel—that is, scarcely anything to speak of, but still, you comprehend, Sir ——, to sharpen one up a little, eh, eh ? ’

“ ‘ Ay, ay,’ replied his guest, smiling, ‘ come, come, that’s right, Burgos—as for me, thank Heaven, I don’t want anything of that sort. I’m confoundedly sharp set already ; so now, Burgos, if you’re ready, we’ll fall to.’

“ ‘ Right, Sir ——, right ! ’ said the skipper, turning towards his cabin, and then halting just before he entered :—

“ ‘ Admiral, got a knife ? ’

“ The sound of this well-known question proved too much for Sir ——’s gravity. Pausing where we stand, he indulged in a hearty fit of laughter, and rejoined with much good nature, ‘ No, by Jove, Burgos, that’s a thing I had quite forgotten—I left mine on board the flag ship ; so, come, we’ll return together and see what they have there.’

“ ‘ Ay, ay, Sir ——, with all my heart,’ returned Burgos, as completely unconcerned as it is possible to conceive. So they stepped into the admiral’s barge, which had been ordered not to shove off, and dined together in the utmost good humour. Sir ——, after finding that the quiz was against him, had to pay his bet for his pains ; while Burgos, on the contrary, has been allowed ever since to eat his dinner as much like a savage as he pleases.”

CHAPTER VIII.

FOR the first few days after the destruction of the unfortunate slaver, the wind continued blowing in the same direction ; which was directly in the teeth of our route for returning home. Soon, however, the fates grew more propitious, and the breeze shifted round sufficiently to admit of our making very decent headway.

As we approached the shores of old England, and ran up the British Channel, I could not help rejoicing ten thousand times a day on the happy change of destiny which I had experienced since making its passage down. When at length, however, I found myself fairly landed on Portsmouth Hard, my joy seemed to know no bounds, and going to an hotel made instant inquiry for Fluke's Folly, the seat of one Philip Fluke, Admiral of the Blue, &c., &c., &c.

Being readily informed that the noted residence was at a distance of some fifteen miles from the good town—otherwise called that vile, irregular, ill-built, worse paved, dirty dog-hole, Portsmouth,—I hired something which its owner dignified with the title of po-shay, and prepared to set out.

In those early days, of which I am “the sad historian,” MacAdam and his improvements had not sprung to light ; and what with vile roads, and worse horses, it was not until sundown that we reached the retreat of the veteran.

We had arrived at a turn of the road, where, looking over a small valley to the left, the traveller's eye was delighted with an enchanting view. — “There, sir, that there dark old rumblety-tumblety is The Folly : down there, sir, among the trees,” bawled my driver from outside the window, drawing up his crazy chaise, with an admonitory “whey—will 'ee?” addressed to his wretched quadrupeds, with as much apprehensive authority as though they had been the most fiery and impatient steeds of a whole blood. — “There, sir,” continued Jehu, pointing with his whip, “the ould admiral has pretty well built and planted all this himself, and a brave sort o' thing he says it is, no doubt ; but I'm thinking when the old boy's gone, 'twil cost him that comes next as much trouble to pull it down as ever did to run it up.”

Hearing the residence of my good old friend so much abused, I let down the window to scrutinize it more minutely. The utmost extent of my observations, however, merely announced to me the fact that the residence in question looked more like a ship than a house.

The sun setting on my left lent all its splendour to the scene before me, and no sound, save the full parting song of the thrush, the soft lowing of the cattle, or the distant baying of the house-dog, broke upon the stillness of the hour.

After my recent emancipation from all the bustle of a ship, I felt that in the delicious silence of that spot there was a solemn and a touching eloquence, which nature only can breathe forth ; and despite of the disparagement of my guide, I could not but confess the “*laudo tamen*” of the Roman satirist to be the language of my heart.

After a renewal of our drive for some few minutes, we again drew up before what I supposed to be the entrance gates ; on the pillars of which, a brief resting time enabled me to descry two objects, which looked very much like the figure-heads of broken up men-of-war. Before any one could alight to pull the bells, the portals swung wide for our passage. Actually, at first, I had a vague impression that I must be entering Greenwich hospital, since on each side stood an old veteran, minus a leg—their hands raised to their hats in honour of the passing visitor.

Popping my head out of the window, to take another look at these two janitors, I found that they had closed the gates and retired ; showing that, however they had been maimed in the service of their country, they had not by their present master been allowed to forget the smartness of a man-of-war.

Our course now lay through a noble avenue of limes, bringing us down by a circuitous route to the Folly, which, completely encircled by wood of no tiny growth, soon hove in sight. If the remarks of my driver had before raised my curiosity, the pile that presented itself was not at all calculated to allay such a feeling.

Of all the strangest whims which ever dictated the form and ornament of a residence, that which moulded and adorned the pile before me must certainly have been the most odd. It consisted of a low but capacious conglomeration of buildings containing three stories ; the front of which was made as closely

as possible to resemble so much of the stern of a first-rate as consisted of the three upper decks.

Further than this I had no time to observe ; for as the post-chaise drew up, the door was opened by a tall, weather-beaten, military-looking personage, whose every movement seemed dictated by some internal clock-work, and who was dressed in a plain suit of mourning ; with powdered hair, and a vast profusion of cambric frill.

“ Is Admiral Fluke at home ? ” I inquired.

“ The admiral, sir,” replied this living automaton, raising his hand to his hat, and saluting me with all the formality of a soldier, “ is now taking his four to six nap.”

“ Hem ! —that’s rather awkward ! ”

“ Will you favour me with your name, sir ? ”

“ Arran.”

My inquirer looked at me for some moments with surprise—I could see the tremor of excited feeling creep over the whole of his erect body. For a brief space it struggled with the usually unmoved rigidity of his features, and then formality giving way to affection, a tear actually sprang into the starched warrior’s eye, while, as his hand made an involuntary movement to clasp mine, he exclaimed, “ God be praised ! —is it you, my dear young master ? a thousand blessings on your head —you, whom I have dandled on my knee ! —I knew you couldn’t be drowned ! —God bless your lordship ! —Why, the admiral—didn’t I say that you’d turn up yet ? —The admiral”—scrubbing his cheek with the cuff of his sleeve—“ not dead ! and we in mourning ! —the admiral—not drown’d after all ! —why the admiral ’ll go out of his senses for joy—Huzza ! ” waving his arm above his head with a suppressed shout, and dancing about as though he had gone mad. “ We’ll have a salute now if ever we fired one—God bless your lordship—a reg’lar future joy.—Cooper ! —Saunders ! my old blazers ! —get your guns ready—come back alive and well—one and twenty guns, my boys.—The admiral—a reg’lar royal salvo ! ”—and the individual whom my appearance had excited to this frenzy of delight, jumped and capered about me as if he had been dancing on hot iron ; snapping his fingers and clapping his sides the while, till I feared that he actually had experienced from my appearance the disaster which he prophesied to his master the admiral.

I, in the meanwhile, was far from being unconcerned at so

great a demonstration of gladness on my account, and the witnessing of such extreme emotion in one whom I necessarily concluded to be my friend made me almost as silly myself.

My welcomer continued to wave one arm on high, and seizing with the other the hand which he had before relinquished, he literally dragged me forward, exclaiming in tones of ecstacy and triumph, "Come along, my lord!—this way. The admiral—not dead!—not drowned!—the admiral!"

I now heard a fine strong old voice, demanding, "Corporal!—Corporal!—you Mister Corporal Royal!—What's the meaning of all this hubbub?—d'ye take it for pay day—that ye're making row enough to wake old Beelzebub?—much less"—here a fit of irritable coughing succeeded—"ugh, ugh, ugh! a poor battered old admiral."

"Oh, sir! Oh, sir!—here's good news, sir!—Can ye bear it?" joyfully demanded the corporal and secretary, suddenly rushing into the room from whence the voice proceeded.

"Bear it, you old fool? you good for nothing old horse—Bear it? bear what?—one would think you'd got a pig of ballast to capsize upon my back!—bear it!—Egad! it's enough to bear you; you disrespectful scoundrel—pouncing in here as if I were the keeper of a ballem rankem hop at the Jolly Sailor! Shut the door, sir!—and bring-to quietly—and let us know what's up now?"

"Up, sir, why, bless his heart!—why here's the Count come!—I said he wasn't drowned!"

"The Count!" repeated the admiral after a pause, in a tone totally different, "God indeed be praised for that!" slightly clasping his hands as he sat by the fire in his easy chair.—"Where is the poor boy, corporal? Go and give him my love, and bring him here."

"Bring him here, sir?—why here he is already, sir, and stands before you as slim and proper a young master as I'd wish to have. Here's his hand, sir," placing mine in that of the veteran, into whose presence I had walked unheard; and who I now, with sorrow, perceived to be totally blind.

Affected by the evident thankfulness with which he received the news of my safety, I could only press the hand of my benefactor, which still trembled in mine, as after a second pause he said, "Thought we'd lost ye, my dear boy—but better, you know, to have ye late than never! Heaven's blessing and a hearty welcome to you—if my being happy to

get ye goes any way towards it. I mustn't say — — — to — to see ye, for it's pleased God that my seeing days should be over; but if ye speak loud I can hear ye yet—enough to say your voice is your father's, boy, all over.—And Corporal—Corporal Royal!"

"Sir."

"Send some one to see about dinner. You're a young boy, ye see, Charles," turning to me, "and I'm an old boy; that's all the difference between us; so my dinner-hour now is four o'clock, but we'll soon have something going for ye. Hey, there—and, Corporal, let me have my jolly-boat alongside.—Charles, my boy, your arm—ye see, I'm obliged to put up with a jolly-boat now, though the time was, when I used to have to lick the French, that I could sport an admiral's barge. But I'm on half pay—now—admiral of the yellow squadron I suppose they call me!—Obliged to put up with anything, we poor old boys, and leave the licking of the French to such young fellows as you!—However, you know, between ourselves I can sport a barge occasionally yet—prize money, boy! prize money! eh, eh?—no thanks to any one. Well, Corporal, is the jolly-boat ready?"

"Ay, ay, sir, ready—ready ten minutes ago;" and the Corporal adjusted the cushions of a Bath chair outside the window, to which the Admiral desired me to lead him, saying, as he seated himself, "There, boy, this is what I call my jolly-boat—so give me the helm," taking the director in his hand; "walk you alongside, Charles—now give way, Dickson." This last order being addressed to the man who pushed from behind, he put the Admiral's jolly-boat in motion, and on we went.

"Now, my boy, look around ye; when my old eyes used to be in the habit of doing duty, we called this the quarter-deck.—I tell the lazy dogs about me to keep it up after the same fashion.—They say they do, but when an old boy grows blind any one may come over him. It's just as they please, I suppose they think; but if you've been aboard a man-of-war you can tell whether it's like what it ought to be. I used to be fond of flowers and gardening; I have a little bit of love left for them yet, and in my day I took good care that the place should be in tight order."

"And so it remains, sir I can assure you," I replied, as I surveyed, with surprise, the curious result of the admiral's extreme attachment to the wooden walls of old England.

We stood upon a long oval grass plat, shaped exactly like

the upper deck of a line-of-battle ship, the bulwarks of which consisted of a very close thick set hedge of privet, clipped with the most minute care. It was so contrived, that even port-holes were cut in it, and a battery of carronades ranged along, which the interest of the admiral had procured from the neighbouring dock-yard.

In the centre of this space stood the capstan, cut out of a tree of box, the booms and boats being fashioned out of evergreens of larger growth. In the centre was rigged a very handsome flag-staff, bearing the Union Jack, half mast high for my decease, and which the corporal prepared to hoist to its more fitting station, as soon as the first gun of the salute should be fired to signify my recently-discovered existence. Behind us, the windows of the room we had left projected in such a manner, and were so painted and arranged, that they bore every resemblance to a poop cabin ; and as I looked around, I could almost fancy myself on board the *Briton*, with the exception, by the bye, of the grass beneath my feet, and the trees growing without the sacred precincts of the quarter-deck.

“ Come, Corporal—if you’re ready—tell those lads to fire away, and hoist that Jack ! Strike that Union after it’s been hoisted twenty minutes, and send up my night flag once more. Since you’re not lost, boy, we’ve still a child for our old age, and thank God for it ! But come,” he said, extending his hand and clasping mine—after the salute had been fired, “ there’s twenty-one guns for ye, you dog—more than you’ve a right to by a precious deal—unless it is for King Charley’s royal blood, as my poor friend the colonel would have said ;—ah, if we live long, we must bear to lose old friends when we least expect it. And now, boy, give me the whole of your proceedings since you wrote me that last letter from the old ship at Leith, till your making your number here at the Folly—for so my devilish good-natured friends have seen fit to call the place—confound their impudence, say I !— Now, Charles, since that letter—”

“ Yes, sir, I heard you mention a letter, but I wrote you none from Leith.”

“ Pooh, pooh, youngster ! Yes, you did,”—pettishly—“ from the old ship ! Don’t you recollect ? And I sent you in reply the—the—the letter on business, in short.”

“ Business, sir ! What business ? The invitation to come and see you ?”

“ No, no ; hang it, lad, how dull you are ! I mean the letter after that containing the remittance.”

“ Remittance !—I have received no remittance !”

“ Why, boy ! how’s this ? I have your answer, acknowledging the receipt of five hundred pounds, which you said you wanted to get off”

“ Gracious Powers ! then it must be a forgery ; for I know nothing of the remittance or the receipt of it !”

“ Ha ! is it so ?—Where’s the corporal ?” This functionary having made his appearance, and brought from the house the letters in question, I found, to my consternation and dismay, that my hand had been forged, and that with no slight dexterity, and thus had been obtained the sum which the admiral had named. As to who might be the perpetrator, not a doubt remained upon my mind that it could alone have been the captain of the smack : and having acquainted the admiral with the disastrous circumstances which had followed my quitting Leith, he confirmed me in my opinion ; though as to the exact manner in which the fraud had been contrived it was impossible for us at present to say.

In order that we might lose no time in ascertaining if our suspicions were correct, we returned forthwith to the house, that I might by the night’s post write off to Edinburgh, for such intelligence as might lead to the detection of the offender. The recovery of the money I feared was hopeless.

On this point, however, nothing could be kinder than the conduct of the admiral. The mere pecuniary loss attendant on this summing up of all my misfortunes, appeared not to weigh in his mind for an instant.—“ As for the money, boy,” said he, “ more yet where that came from, so never trouble your head about that, content enough to think you cheap at that sum. You’ve lived to see one set of villains punished, and I hope yet we may catch the worst, because the most cunning of the rogues. I’m sure I’m deeply obliged to Captain Burgos—odd sort of fish as he is ; and as for this fellow you mention, this Will Watch, he’s a true chip of the old block. Corporal Royal—by the bye—my compliments to Captain Burgos, happy to see him here to-morrow to dinner. Spare cot, say, and the longer he stays we’ll be the better pleased ;—ask him to bring out this lad, Will Watch, with Lim—I must have a mess of chat with the youngster.”

“ Ay, ay, sir.”

“Now Charles, my boy, I hear the glasses ringing on the stairs—true midshipman, I suppose, you’re ready for your dinner, half a dozen times a day, eh? Right, boy, right!”

The meal having made its appearance, fully warranted all those fond anticipations which on my road had so hurried me from my fond musings on the sublime and beautiful of the admiral’s little domain.

“Charles, my boy!—I’ll take a friendly glass with you, and drink a welcome to your new home—Phil Fluke’s Folly, I suppose we must call it.—You’ll always find bachelor’s fare here,—plenty of freedom and freedom to plenty;—there are many pleasant follies though in a bachelor’s life, you know, boy, eh? and I hope you’ll always find this one of them, eh, Charles? Good wine this, what say ye, boy?—the only good thing I could ever knock out of a Frenchman.”—And no one was a better judge than the admiral, I soon found.

“Ah! I’ve seen some queer things in the service in my day, and I’ve often been pressed to write a little sort of—you understand boy!”—and the admiral, as the generous wine warned him in the pursuit of a favourite topic, gave me the accustomed nudge.

“To write your life, sir.”

“Exactly, Charles: ay, ay, they often tell me it would make a good sort of a kind of book, d’ye see; and if I don’t do it, boy, it’s from no disrespect of my friends: for I think, if an old officer can advance the interests of his profession, by any little memoirs, he’s bound—d’ye mark me, boy?—he’s bound, I say, to sacrifice any little feelings of delicacy which he might entertain on the subject. But ah, ah! I doubt that I am quite equal to the sort of thing myself. My health, boy—it isn’t what it used to be, and I’ve lost my sight, ye see; and though I might dictate well enough, and in truth without any serious discomfort, d’ye see?—and though Royal—honest Joe is a true chip—yet—a corporal—it—it wouldn’t do; an undertaking of this sort—the—the character of the service—the—the—the accuracy which a great nation has a right to expect from—from a flag officer to whom chance or good fortune—call it what you will, boy—has given the occupancy of a prominent station in the eye of the world.—No, it would not do, sir!—an undertaking of this importance, and circumstances such as these, I repeat, demand a far different medium from—from a—a—corporal—of—of marines.”

As the good old officer brought out this last sentence—this lame and impotent conclusion, I could scarcely restrain my laughter; but, seeing that it was a subject that weighed on his mind, I replied, “Surely, sir, some one more fitted for such a trust might easily be found, to embrace with avidity the task of becoming the biographer of Admiral Fluke.”

“Why, ay, boy, that’s true enough, there are many ~~se~~ lawyers about me, ready and willing enough to catch at such a chance, like sharks at a double piece of pork. But it wouldn’t do, sir, to compromise the records of my profession—my country—my fame, in short, evrything that is dear to me, by relying on one with whose character I was not fully acquainted, any more than it would be safe to trust to the good grammar and spelling of Corporal Royal. I once had a ~~h~~ope, to be sure, that I had found one equal, as far as any individual might be, to do all honour and justice to a subject of so—so much consideration, even though it might not be in my lifetime, d’ye see, boy!—but, God’s will be done: that hope, like many others, is all over!” A pause ensued. “ “Twas to your father, boy, I meant to have thus proved my attachment; ‘twas to him I had left all my papers; and he, you know, might have done justice to them if any one could, for he had already acquired literary celebrity as the historian of the last years of —. Ay, ay! the father, I doubt not, would have done it well, my boy; but who can tell, if I live long enough, and things go on smoothly, why not the son?”

“Oh, sir, I only wish that I may deserve that you should think so.”—“Well,—well, boy, take courage, you can’t rig a ship on the first day of hoisting the pennant, you only commission her.—You’re a young lad yet, d’ye see, and you must fag as some one did who’s not far from ye, and get hold of all the ins and outs that a sailor should be master of. I’m sure the Count never neglected any part of your education.—Hark!—boy, how many bells go there?—Why, can that be ten o’clock?—Listening to you, younker, I haven’t noted Time and his seythe! But ring the bell, boy, and if you’re done with the tea-things get the wreck cleared away, for it’s time I should get under weigh myself, and since you’ll take no more wine, the decanters may go too, or I shall be hauled over the coals as usual by master Corporal Royal—Joe Royal—my most loyal Corporal Royal, as I call him. The fellow, as you perceive, carries his top hamper a little too lightly occa-

sionally, but I must trim him. The old horse has a bad habit too of shamming deaf. I should be troubled, I take it, to knock that out of him, and he's a little bit conceited, may be, but that's my fault, for I've petted the old scoundrel, and he was a mighty favourite, by the way, as he'll tell you, of a gallant dashing officer, who, had he lived, poor fellow, would have proved a kind and useful uncle t' ye, boy, but he'll tell you all about that the first time he gets fairly hold of ye, and —and he has one or two other oddities; he's too old a servant not to be an esteemed one! but talk of the devil and he's sure"—added the admiral, as he heard the stately and measured step of his factotum outside the door.

A good-tempered respectable-looking female followed the corporal into the room, whom I rightly conjectured to be that important personage, the housekeeper of the Folly; one of the favoured few of the softer sex allowed to reside within the sacred and monastic precincts—in short, Mrs. Joseph Royal, wife of the all-potential corporal and secretary. Behind this good lady came Dickson, bearing the veteran's evening meal, for he never partook of tea, which he most illiberally pronounced, like many other mistaken persons, to be "a wish-wash only fit for young boys and old women."

"Good evening t'ye, admiral, good evening, sir, and may I make so bold as to ask how ye feel yourself to night?" said Mrs. Royal, with as profound a curtsey as if the object of her attention were still able to perceive the scrupulous deference thus paid to him.

"Ah, Peggy," he returned, holding out his hand, "is that you?—Hey there, Corporal! Dickson!—one of you give Mrs. Royal a chair."

"My humble thanks, admiral, many thanks to ye, sir,—I have one here;" and seating herself near both of us, she entered into a long inquiry into all those little complainings which, whether our years be in the sere or budding leaf, we naturally love to pour into the ear of one whom nature has kindly given to us for the sweetest purposes of consolation.

Having finished his supper, the admiral rose, saying,—

"Now, Charley, boy, you must excuse an old fellow's early hours in bringing-to in his proper berth for the night. You'll be able to get everything you want, dare say. So good night t' ye."

"Stay, sir, let me give you an arm up-stairs to your room."

“ Why, thank ye, thank ye, boy,” accepting my proffered assistance ; “ ‘tisn’t always that I have a younker about me to think of these matters, though I once thought I might have had some of my own. Well, well, no matter !—less fuss at parting may be ;—and Charley, boy, we must think o’ that said book for ye,—’twould be a fine thing, sir, for a young seaman,—’twould—’twould be a noble introduction to your brother officers, to the notice of your country. Body o’ me, sir !—such a memorial would be a sort of letter of credit, d’ye mark me, boy, on the distinction of the world ! So, so, here we are at my cabin door—I won’t plague ye any further, youngster,—so, once more, good night, and by, by, lad !”

Being thus dismissed for the night by my worthy friend, I turned about to Corporal Royal to inquire for my own room, but was assured that I should in vain try to find a bed by myself, and that being the case, I was to wait below until he—said Joe Royal—“ should have put his master to bed ;” when he would attend on me. Accordingly, in the course of half an hour, the secretary made his appearance, and with his usual salute announced himself ready to conduct me to my room.

Here, as in every other department of the “ Folly,” every want was studied, and every comfort provided ; and after the privation I had so recently undergone on shipboard, it was with no slight zest that I returned to all the luxuries of a home.

“ By the bye, Corporal,” said I, while he busied himself in my behalf as naturally as if he had known my wishes,—“ I think you once served with an uncle of mine, did you not ?”

“ Did I not ?” replied Joe, suddenly desisting from the unbuckling of my shoe, and gazing in my face with one of his most stately looks.—“ Served with him, sir ?—ay ! for many a long day, and queerer service I’ve seen under him than ever I’ll see again ; ay, sir, or you either, though you live twenty lives out. Wasn’t I with him in the celebrated action of * * * ? not the one master was talking of, sir,—long after that,—the one when Admiral * * was put under arrest ;”—and Joe put his finger to his nose in a manner which he meant to look particularly solemn, but which truly proved how nearly the sublime and the ridiculous can be allied.

“ Ah, Joe ! tell me how that happened ; come, let me have all the particulars !”—but the secretary had caught a glimpse of the smile that his significant action had called up on my cheek,

and pretended not to hear what I said, or rather to hear that which he well knew I had never uttered.

“ Well, well, if you don’t wish to hear it, sir, it don’t signify ; though may be it concerns you a little nearer than you may imagine.”

“ But, Joe, I do wish to hear all about it.”

“ No, no, sir, as you say, I won’t force it upon ye.”

“ But, Royal, come, my good fellow.”

“ Oh, I won’t force it on ye.”

“ But, pooh!—you surely don’t believe such an extravagant story yourself,”—determined to get it out of him,—“ it’s quite out of the question—quite improbable,—I may say impossible, for a—”

“ Quite impossible, my lord! Don’t believe it! Your lordship may believe it or not, just as you please; but I, Corporal Royal, that am a corporal now, and was a corporal then, had the admiral under my charge as prisoner; and what’s more, my lord, I’ve never had the heart to be made a sergeant since, though I might a’ got the stripes,—ay, or the colours to boot, for the matter o’ that, scores o’ times,—for I’ve had kind friends, too, in my time, and your uncle, Master Charles, was the first and best of them. God forgive you for ever doubting me!”

“ Nay, now Joe, I only thought—”

“ Well, may be, my lord, you did; but if-so-be you think I’m ‘bellishing a little, as the admiral says, only you ask him to-morrow, and though ‘tis a subject he never likes to talk on, he can’t deny a word, for he had the whole on’t over and over again from Captain P——, who was serving aboard as lieutenant at the time. But one thing ye see, the admiral’s a little tender, and may be he thinks ‘twas going a little bit too far. Well, well!—one man pulls the bough down, and another plucks the apples!

“ As for your uncle, sir, I owe him more than ever I’ll be able to pay to any of ye, Master Charles; for if ever he saved an innocent lad from going round the fleet, he saved me, sir, once at Spithead; where—God make me thankful for it—he was one of the court-martial. Ah! sir, I often think a bit o’ chipped marble is a poor sort o’ reward for forty years’ service.”

“ Why, yes! after all, Joe, I think the king’s service is very encouraging.”

“No, sir, hard enough! and yet ye seem to like it. Why, there’s six or seven of ye to my knowledge, first and last, have lived and died in it, as ye may say. Some in action, some drowned, and if ye live long enough, Master Charles, why not you—and then, mayhap, though poor old Joe mayn’t live to see it, the ——”

“Oh, defend me, Joe! You’re killing me off before my time; and to tell you the truth—most royal Joe Royal!—I am so desperately sleepy, that all the glory in the world will not tempt me to die, until I have had a good snooze to-night—that’s to say, if I can help it—so if you’ve burnt a sufficiently large hole in that bed, with the warming-pan, I’ll take refuge therein, till such time as you see fit to call me to-morrow, and so, good night, Mr. Joe.”

“Good night, Master Charles; you shall be called early enough. I’ll just take these traps away to get them a bit of a brush, and so God bless your lordship.”

“Stay, Joe—that word reminds me. In future, remember, Royal, I am neither count nor lord—I must adapt myself to my fallen fortunes; and henceforth, Joe, when you are extolling my virtues, and enumerating my possessions, I fear that you must confine yourself to the brief catalogue of a fair name, a good sword, and a small, small competence! Now, bear this in mind in future, that’s a good fellow; since the mention of empty words, only carries with it a sense of present mockery, and the remembrance of past misfortune.”

On hearing this request—than which, I suppose, nothing could have been more harrowing to the dignity of Joe Royal—he poured forth upon my drowsy ear a long and laboured harangue, in which “my uncle,” “my ancestors,” “the family,” “the service,” “admiral,” and “sir,” all combined, with a united force, to drive me far into the land of dreams, from which I was only aroused by the loud knocking of my temporary valet next morning.

CHAPTER IX.

HAVING succeeded in awaking at the summons of honest Joe, I heard him go on to the cabin of the admiral, which was adjoining.

Tap, tap—no answer. *Tap, tap, tap*—still no reply. *Bang, bang, bang*.

“Eh!—eh!”

Bang, bang, bang, bang. “Eight o’clock, admiral!”

“Eh?—eh? Ah, very well!”

“Weather moderate, with fine breezes, admiral.”

“Eh?—eh?—yes,” sleepily.

“Not a cloud to be seen, admiral; sun shining bright.”

“O——h!”

“Wind at sou-sou-west, admiral!”

A long loud snore.

Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang.

“Eh?—eh? what, what? Who’s there? Who’s there? What’s the matter? Why, Joe?—Corporal—Royal, is that you?”

No answer.

“Royal!”

Still silent.

“You Mister Corporal Royal, I say?”

Not a sound.

“Royal! Royal!” in accents of rising anger; “you confounded old obstinate deaf mule! answer me, you dog!—what sort o’ weather is it?”

“Ay, ay, admiral!—I’ll get your breakfast—all ready for ye.”

“Hang your breakfast, sir, and you too—your breakfast choke you, I say! How’s the wind? does it rain or not?”

“Yes, yes, admiral!—you shall have it all ready; I’ll go down and make the tea at once.”

“Tea! you old scoundrel! Don’t talk to me of your filthy swish swash;—I say, how’s the weather? and you know I say so!—Come in here, sir! and show your old ugly phiz, and I’ll break your neck for your impudence!”

“Very well, sir, I’ll go down and keep the toast warm,—there’s nothing like buttered toast with tea.”

“Royal, sirrah—Royal—Royal—you old horse—you old dog-fish!” and at each objurgation away went a shoe at the unfortunate door!—“You good-for-nothing old shrivelled-up skulking swab!—you—you wretched old corporal of marines,” and keeping time to this finale of his rage, I heard something smash against the door—followed by a sort of smothered laugh from the old veteran himself, as he added, “There, you saucy scoundrel, fall down over that and cut your shins, do”—while the ring of glass upon the floor announced that with this pious intention he had demolished his water-tumbler.

Hurrying my own toilet as rapidly as my laughter would permit, I hastened to proffer my assistance to the veteran, which he received with joy, and having thus got him rigged, we together descended to the breakfast room, and surprised master Joe, stretched at his ease in the admiral’s chair of state, reading the newspapers, as was his custom, and preparing the kernel of their chit-chat for his master.

“Well, you old scoundrel, you’re reading the newspaper, eh?”—said the admiral, catching the peculiar crackle which they make. “Come, bundle your old bag of bones out of my chair, and order up my arrow-root; and tell me what there is to learn in the world;”—and the veteran seated himself at the table, without a trace of his transitory anger remaining, either in his manner or his mind.

This meal being over, the admiral ordered what he called his barge, to take us over the grounds, telling me that the crew were a present from my father.

What, in the name of fortune, thought I, is coming now, in this most extraordinary and amphibious abode? I had not long to wonder, for a very nice little chaise drew up at the gangway of the quarter-deck, capable of holding four people; the crew consisting of six pretty Shetland ponies. Getting into this, we were soon whisked round to another of the admiral’s favourite spots, the main-deck battery. Here, on a terrace to the right of the house, sixteen very beautiful nine-pounder French brass guns awaited my inspection. They had all been taken in different prizes made by their present owner, and to almost every one was attached some particular “yarn,” with which I was made duly acquainted; we then turned our course without the immediate precincts, and went to view the fish-ponds, pre-

serves, and other objects of attention, all of which appeared to be in the same thriving condition. The admiral must, indeed, have been a lucky man with the prize-money, for which he was so fond of saying he had to thank no one ; since the estate seemed not only valuable, but very extensive, with some of the sweetest views that I could imagine of English scenery.

Returning for the dinner hour, we were just in time to receive Captain Burgos with his appropriate salute, and with him came the surgeon, and a lieutenant, but not my friend Will Watch, for so great had been his impatience to visit his home, that he had started for Greybeach when the admiral had sent the invitation.

A sumptuous meal in the extravagant substantial fashion of the old times was set on table, and received the due homage of the party ; Corporal Royal, as usual, taking his stand at his master's right hand, and supplying the loss of sight as far as possible by his attentions. Every one seemed to enjoy the hospitality of the venerable host right heartily ; and Captain Burgos, in his droll incomprehensible manner, told numerous stories, which certainly were most laughable, brought out as they were without a single muscle of the little man's face being moved.

The cloth having disappeared, Joe Royal, being by immemorial custom, prescription, and privilege the admiral's toastmaster, received his daily allowance of port, two bumpers, to give forth,—First—“The King ! gentlemen ! and God bless him.” Second—“The Royal Navy, gentlemen, and the next promotion !”—two toasts which our host informed us, he had never failed to drink daily for the last seven-and-thirty years.

On the following morning, the lieutenant and surgeon returned to the ship. After staying with us for a week, Captain Burgos obtained leave of absence to go to London, and gave me permission to remain at the “Folly” until such time as the ship should be on the point of sailing, which, however, did not take place for some time.

In the meanwhile, I was actively employed during such time as was not spent in amusement, in fitting myself out, in all that it was possible that I could or should want. The admiral provided me with innumerable letters of introduction to officers of all ranks and degrees, and in all stations, and which, to say the truth, spoke of me with a kindness that often made me blush as I indited to his dictation.

On my first arrival at the “Folly” I confess I was not altogether without apprehensions of proving—“in the way;” as the habits of youth and age are generally so much at variance. Never was I more agreeably disappointed. My arrival seemed almost to have given birth to a new data with the old veteran. About a month after my arrival at the “Folly,” we were one evening driving slowly on our return home; the beauty of the sun-set, and the interest of the topic under discussion, had seduced us into wandering further than we had intended, and, as a necessary consequence, of being later than was prudent for the admiral’s health.

We had just emerged from a dark narrow lane, and were entering on a small sort of heath, where the ruggedness and declivity of the road required us to proceed slowly. Engaged in our conversation I had paid no attention to what was going on around, till a heavy jump of feet from a hedge made me look round.

Four ragged-looking villains, springing after our little vehicle, met my eye in an instant.

“Drive, Royal, drive for your life; we are waylaid!” I cried, unable to distinguish how our assailants were armed, but convinced that plunder was their object.

“Waylaid!” re-echoed Royal in astonishment, first bestowing a hearty lash on his startled cattle, and then turning his head in the direction of the attacking force. But he was destined to obtain, and very speedily, a much more intimate knowledge on this head than was at all pleasant.

Our ponies, frightened at the noise, made a rush to one side of the road, where our wheels got entangled with some brushwood at the bottom of a bank. Our foes were in an instant alongside; the unfortunate Royal, pounced on by two of the stoutest hands, was hurled with violence to the ground, and, while a third fastened on the reins of our leaders, the fourth directed his course towards the admiral and myself.

Snatching the old officer’s large walking bamboo from its corner of the chaise, and waiting till my opponent was within two feet of me, I lifted the stick as if about to make a cut at his head, but contented myself with simply thrusting at his face, which I thought much better. I was not deceived, for the unfortunate wretch receiving the ferrule directly in the eye, dashed his hands up to his face, threw himself on the ground, and literally rolling in the dust from extreme pain, added by

his yells to the clamour which Joe had already set up for "help! help!"

"Help 'tis, my hearty," suddenly and most unexpectedly re-echoed a voice seemingly not unfamiliar. At this moment I was leaping out to assist Royal—and naturally turning to look from whence came this most welcome ally, I beheld the figure of a young and powerful sailor issuing from the very gap whence these marauders had borne down upon us.

For a moment I feared that he, too, was one of the Philistines; but no—with a heavy shillelah flourishing in one hand, and a true Jack Tar's bundle in the other, he sprung like a young war-horse to the spot where the corporal was struggling—singing out to the aggressors—"Hey, there, you parley-vous!" Down was dashed his bundle on the head of one, and such a tempest of blows showered upon that of the other, that the action was decided as summarily as it had commenced.

Foreseeing the great probability of gaining neither honour nor profit, the holder of our steeds fairly took to his heels, scrambling up the bank and making off across the common as hard as he could run. In this heroic act he was very wisely followed by one of the corporal's late combatants, leaving his fellow robber, captive and insensible, in the hands of incensed Joe.

Seeing how the game had gone ahead, I turned naturally to look for my own more immediate acquaintance, but he too had become a vanishing quantity, which in truth I was well contented he should remain. With the next impulse I turned to thank our gallant deliverer—surely I knew that figure—another step towards him—and that face—could it be possible?—yes, indeed, it was no other than—Will Watch.

"You here, Will? and in time to render such an aid!" grasping his hand with both of mine in the fulness of my joy. "I would not have had it otherwise for the world!"

"Charles, my boy! Charles! where are you—what's the matter, how goes the day?"

"Right heartily won, my dear admiral," I replied, while Will jumped forward to hold the struggling ponies until Royal should have bound his prisoner. "The day is ours and without injury, but we have to thank my old friend Watch, that our throats remain whole and our purses untouched."

"What, is't your old crony Will Watch, boy? God bless him, then, say I—where is he?"

“ Holding the heads of our frightened cattle, but he’ll soon be at your side, admiral, and you know well how to thank him as he deserves.”

Going up to the corporal, who was sadly battered, I found him standing over his bound enemy, shaking his fist with ire, and execrating all the “thievish French villains” who ever were born, or ever would be; while the highwayman, to my utter astonishment was pouring forth a most eloquent and doleful strain, ending in an appeal to the mercy of the corporal, for a foreigner who, urged to desperation by misfortune, exile, and starvation, now threw himself upon the mercy of a generous Briton. Certes, monsieur! thought I, 'tis an odd way of throwing yourself on a man’s mercy to fall on him *vi et armis*.—However, as the fellow was bound, and could not stir, I suggested to Joe that he should quit his victim for a few minutes and get his horses ready to proceed; otherwise, I added, the routed foe might rally and return in superior force. This hint was enough for a head so sorely bruised as that of Royal, who, leaving the Frenchman in the road, relieved Will Watch of his charge, and prepared with the utmost celerity to make the best of his way to the “Folly.” As for Watch, I now took him to the admiral, who thanked him for his timely relief, with all the fervour which such a heart would naturally feel, and such services demanded, desiring him that he would take the spare seat beside Royal, and accompany us home, “where, I don’t doubt, my brave boy, that Phil Fluke will be able to find something better than words to offer ye. As for that poor French dog of a prisoner, Charles, who tells ye that he’s just emigrated and landed from Havre,—why, d’ye see, starvation will drive an honest man beside himself sometimes—not that he’s likely to be one, by the by, but—still—let him take his chance—leave him bound on the bank there, out of harm’s way, and tell him if he wants money he’ll do much better to work for it in an honest way, and, meanwhile, to give him a lift, here’s a little loose cash. You know, boy, before now we’ve knocked a little out of the subjects of Louis the Grand, so 'tis but fair to give back a mite to the poor followers of Louis the Miserable.”

The five-and-twenty shillings thus generously given to a foe, I put into the Frenchman’s fob. Russian as he was, his tale might have been true. Touched too deeply for words, he fastened his eyes on my countenance.—Was it a tear which

glistened there?—I know not!—but as I turned away, after leaving him in safety, my ears caught the involuntary exclamation “*Comment—Mon Dieu ! et à moi !*”

In another minute we were on our road to the “Folly,” which we reached—no thanks to the driving of the corporal—in safety.

“Now Watch, my brave lad, follow me,” said the admiral, placing his hand on Will’s shoulder and supporting himself from the chaise to the door, as he got out.—“We haven’t done with you yet, I can assure ye—we must thank ye, lad, properly, in the first place, and have your story in the second. So here we are—bring yourself to, now, on a chair beside me. Now my gallant fellow, Watch, for aught I know, I owe my life to ye, but be that as it may, I owe my purse to ye this night at any rate. The former we’ll suppose is not worth a very long purchase, but I take it at your hands and thankfully, lad. As to the latter, I believe ye may safely trust me for paying ye the debt, interest and principal, so give me your hand to the bargain. Now, boy, tell me—how did it so hap that you were in the offing, when that pretty privateer’s crew bore down on us?”

“Why ye see, sir,” replied Will, affected at the admiral’s kindness, and stroking down his hair with as much awkward solicitude as if his superior were still able to observe his appearance, “your honour will see the long and short o’ the matter is this—I belong to the Briton with Mr. Arran.”

“Av, ay, I knew that a month ago!”

“Did ye, sir?” and Will seemed somewhat surprised. “Well then, your honour, soon as we came into port, the captain gave me leave to go and see my friends.”

“And that I know too, lad, seeing I sent to Captain Burgos to let me have ye ashore here for a week or two, but you’d given us the slip beforehand—so now, try again.”

“Well then,” resumed Will, somewhat puzzled, “does your honour know, that after staying as long as I could at Greybeach with my friends, I was coming back to my leave?”

“No, lad, I didn’t know that—but I guessed as much—so now, as you’re in the fair way, make sail—you were coming back from your leave’—always do that, youngster, and many a scrape it will keep ye out of.”

“Yes, sir, I was coming back to my leave, and having been walking ever since five o’clock this morning, it came into my

head, just as the afternoon watch seemed closing in, that I might as well step into the first cow-shed and take a caulk (a nap), till the hot sun had gone down, and then I could make for the town in the cool of it. Well, ye see, sir, I found a tumble-down sort of a cart to make a berth of, and when 'twas filled with hay from a rick nigh handy, it made a snuggy sort of a crib, I can tell your honour. I was roused up from my snoose by four ragamuffins jabbering away in some lingo I knew must be French, for I could swear 'twasn't English. So, as I know Johnny Crapeau is never up to much good, and I didn't want to be eased of the few shillings I had in my fob, I thought it best to lay quiet; hear, see, and say nothing. Now, your honour, 'twas so dark that I couldn't make much out on 'em, but I guessed as much as they were pirates, from their going out every now and then, to keep a look-out on the road. Presently we heard a carriage coming, and no sooner had they caught the first rumble, than the villains gave one another the private signal, as it might be, and stooping down on all fours, crept right away as hard as they could go, your honour.—Oh, ho! Johnny! says I, so you think you've catched a prize do ye? but not so fast, my mates! I'll see if I can't come up with a shot or two in the wake of ye, and with that I slipped out after them, keeping some fifty yards astern. I wasn't long before I heard them open fire on your little craft, and away I pulled foot for it life and soul, and soon gave one fellow, as your honour knows, the weight of my bundle, and was in after all for some of the best of it.—He didn't find my little kit any feather, I'll be bound for him, for ye see, sir, my mother had stowed away with my traps a sort of stone grog-bottle, for the old 'oman has no great hatred to the true liquor, when the truth's told first and last."

"She hasn't? eh, lad?—Well, then, tell her with my compliments you've helped me out with her bottle, so I must help her with mine—as for yourself—trust me for taking care of an old friend—but I must leave you now to Mr. Arran, he'll see you have everything you may want, I'm sure. Royal, tell Peggy that I shall have my arrow-root upstairs to-night;—this little breeze has rather tired me:—"—and after thanking Will once and again, and finally shaking him by the hand, the admiral took my arm, and went off to bed; where, as soon as I had seen him safely deposited, I left him to the care of Royal, and returned to my friend Will.

My first care was to set before him that which I was sure he must greatly need—some substantial refreshment. “Now then, Will,” said I, “you must expect to give me nothing less than a full and authentic narrative of everything at home. Your mother, your old friend Woodenhead, and above all, of your own little Fanny.”

At this name a flash of animation lit up Will’s eyes for an instant, but it was quickly succeeded by an air of melancholy and dejection.

“Ah, sir!” he replied, after a moment’s pause, “time brings changes at home, as well as elsewhere. I tried as much as I could, going along, not to expect too much. But, lor! Mr. Arran, somehow when we’ve been away from old friends for a long time, do what one will, we can’t help thinking of much more happiness in meeting them, than after all turns up to us. As for me, when I first drew nigh the old cottage, I thought I should have laid down in the road and died away—I’m sure if I’d been going to be tied up to the gangway, to have four dozen, I could never have funk’d it more than I did going in amongst them, and seeing my own mother, and—Fanny. Well, finding I couldn’t get on no ways, as it might be, I was obliged to bring to, and sit down for a short spell on an old grindstone, that I can remember playing about, ay, before I was half-fathom-high—’tis nigh buried in the sand like, not fifty yards from our door. Many and many’s the time I’ve sat upon it with little Fan. Well, ye see, sir, there I stay’d, watching the old ’oman’s door, for some one to come out or go in, and trembling all the while like a child. Well, ye see, sir, there stood the old ’oman’s door open, and a little dog sleeping on a mat in the sun, but, when I came to think how long I’d been away, I felt, sir, as if I couldn’t have gone in over that door, if all the Ingees had been but t’other side of the threshold. Now, I thought, I’d make a clean bolt of the matter, and get it over at once, so somehow or other I tumbled along till I got up against the door-post, and after leaning there for a minute or so, just to get rid of a sick-like all-overishness, —I stepped across the little dog, and brought up in the first chair.

“Nobody seemed to be moving about, so I gave a rap on the door with my stick—up jumped the little cur barking, and down came an old woman—‘Holloa!’ says I, ‘you a’nt Mother Watch—are ye?’—for somehow or other, ye see, sir, though

the old 'oman had married twice, the first name stuck by her through thick and thin. 'I, Mother Watch?' says the old lady, 'no, I'm not Mother Watch—Mother Watch has moved away from here some time ago. She's gone to live in Williams's Cottages, down yonder.' 'Gone!—nothing's happened to her, has there, old dame?' said I. 'Happened to her? what should happen to her? Nothing's happened that I know of—she moved away from here three months ago, because her husband died, and she didn't want so large a house.' 'Husband dead! what, then, is Hawkins the porter dead?' 'Oh, ay, dead and buried long ago!' 'And the old 'oman's daughter Fan—is she—is she well, old dame?' 'Ay, ay, well and hearty for anything I know.' 'Hurrah!' said I, jumping up with a caper that astonished the old soul, and making sail down to the cottages as hard as I could crack. 'Fanny, well, and old Woodenhead dead and buried! that's the time o' day, my hearties!—Hip, hip, hip, hurrah!' Well, ye see, sir, on I went—tear away—right over everything—men, women, and children, all as one to Will, till I made the cottages in no time—'which is the old 'oman's?' thought I; and I was just going to ask for it, when somehow or other—hang me if I didn't forget all about it—for ye see, I found myself brought up all standing, by a regular muster, as it might be, of the neighbours round the door of the first little crib I came to. 'Tis a shame! 'Tis a shame!' cried most of them. 'Let the poor woman go, you cowardly villains!' cried the others. 'She's offered all she has, and isn't that enough for ye?'

"'Hang it!' said I, 'fair play's a jewel, and I'll see it done,' for ye see, sir, I heard some of the women folks crying from within, and my blood was up before I knew where I was; so stepping in among the rest, what should I see but two of the king's hard bargainers lugging some old dame off, I supposed to prison—she didn't seem much inclined to go, 'tis true, but as they had her hard and fast by the arms, all her struggling was of no use. I'd scarcely set eyes upon 'em, when I heard some of the neighbours sing out, 'That's right! give it to 'em! give it to 'em! tear the very life out on 'em, Mother Watch!' Sir!—that was enough for me—I was over their heads, and into the cottage, and down went first one, and then the other, —ay, sir, in less time than I've taken to tell it. 'There, ye land sharks!' said I, 'there's the full length o' your backs for the pair of ye; and don't think to get up while I'm here, or

by the piper that played before Moses, I'll crack every rib in your hulls ! Heart alive ! sir ! if there wasn't a pretty scene ! 'Will, Will, my darling jewel !' cried the old 'oman, hugging me in her arms on one side. 'Will, my own Will !' sobbed poor little Fan, nigh fainting away on the other. 'Will Watch —Will Watch come back !' shouted the neighbours, rushing in round us. I thought I should have been smothered, or torn to pieces at the least of it. Well, ye see, sir, as I could get no answer, I began to ask what the hubbub was all about. Sure enough, the old 'oman had been up to her old tricks again. Some of Johnny Crapeau's liquor had been found in her store rooms, without King's Georgey's license,—they fined the old soul ten pounds, and wanting that, must go to prison. Your honour may guess I soon rummaged out the coin, though not over flush ; yet, as I only brought the money for them from the first, 'twas as well to help them out this bout as any other. The catchpoles were rather hard o' managing, or so, but what would heal the law, I thought would heal the limb, so flinging over some of the metal for their broken heads, they hauled their boats off. The neighbours they shook a paw a bit, wished as joy, slipped their cables one by one, and left us alone. The old 'oman, when she'd taken a little sup, just to compose her, as she said, turned out to be as jolly as she could wish, nor was there much the matter with little Fan, when once she managed to get over the 'stericks, as they call it."

"Well, Will, I'm right glad to hear it ! and so, barring this inauspicious opening of your visit, you found everything as you could wish ?"

"Why yes, sir ; pretty well."

"Perhaps, Will," said I, "your mother may be the better of a little of that assistance, which we all occasionally find so useful. If it be this which concerns you, set your mind at ease ; after the obligation under which you have this night laid the admiral, I know his liberality too well, to think that he will see you want for anything—not to mention my own poor purse, which you must always consider as freely open to your wants, as to mine."

"No, sir, no ; thank ye ; after your kindness I'd make bold to tell you, if at any time I was hard drove for a shilling or two—no, I believe the old 'oman has pretty nigh enough for her wants ; and as for her smuggling, why, your honour knows it's in the nature of her, so that goes for nothing."

“ Well,” thought I, “ something is not as you would have wished, though the cause of your disquiet, my faithful friend, may be too tender to bare to the eye of him who marks its effects with regret. But I shall some day be made acquainted with it, I suppose. Can it be some change in Fanny’s feelings ? ” This had glanced across my mind before, but though we conversed for some little time longer, before retiring to bed, I could not fix on anything to confirm my conjecture.

On the afternoon of the next day, Will came to me to ask my advice. He told me that the admiral had just given him a little sealed packet, saying, “ There, lad, put that carefully away for a stormy day ; and God only send ye may never have occasion to use it—in that case, d’ye see, when your little Fan comes to change her surname, ye may hand it over to her, as a marriage gift.” As poor Will muttered the last words, they seemed to stick in his throat. Taking no notice of his thoughts, I opened the packet, with his consent ; but when I announced the contents to be bank notes, to the amount of two hundred pounds, he seemed greatly astonished : for me, I was not much surprised—it was just like the noble munificence of the old sailor—but Will knew not what to think of it. His own eyes, however, convinced him of the fact, while his prudence and good sense made him concur in my advice, that they should be at once deposited in——’s bank, in his name, while I promised to let him have for his mother’s use, before we went to sea, a note for twenty more. When I told Watch of the forgery of which I was sure the captain of the smack had been guilty, he confirmed me in my views ; saying that he was just the man to commit such a fraud. Before I again set off to sea, however, the matter was set at rest by a letter from the owner. His vessel had been missing, passengers and all, ever since her having set off from London, on her return to Leith, and news had now arrived of a piracy committed on the coast of Africa, by some one closely answering his description. Well, thought I, it require no genius to see through all your manœuvres now. I only wish I could as plainly see the gallows which is to reward them.

The day of sailing, in the meanwhile, gradually crept on, and at length arrived. With a somewhat foreboding heart, and many and reiterated adieus, I bade farewell to the generous and single-hearted veteran, whose gentle sway, amid the welcome

hospitalities of “Fluke’s Folly,” I had so much reason to bless. Nor was Will Watch less deeply affected, nor less kindly dismissed.

The barge, however, being at length in readiness, we stepped into it, and were, by the most loyal Corporal Royal, driven back to Portsmouth; where we once more embarked for H.M.S. Briton, then lying at Spithead—previously, however, I received from him, a long and particular lecture on all I ought to do, and all I ought to leave undone; with never ending injunctions ever to remember the example of “my uncle,” the “Folly,” and the admiral, and above all and every thing else, he modestly but specially charged me, never to forget the devoted zeal of him—Corporal Joe Royal!

CHAPTER X.

“If ever there beat an honest heart in a human bosom,” said I, “there goes one!” as Joe Royal turned sorrowfully away, and my boat slowly departed from the land. After the many proofs of kindness I had received at the “Folly,” I felt as if once more leaving home to fling myself upon the world.

It was on the evening of the thirteenth of May, that I once more arrived on board my ship, with the expectation that we were to sail on the following day. In this, however, I was disappointed, for, as we only unmoored and lay at single anchor, it was but prolonging the disagreeable feelings of parting, to linger in suspense so near those friends from whom I had separated at least for some time, and perhaps for ever.

The pipe of all hands up anchor on the ensuing day was one, therefore, of great joy.

The squadron which now quitted Spithead, and of which the Briton formed a part, was the last of four divisions, which had successively sailed from Portsmouth, to form, as was reported, the Mediterranean fleet. The first squadron, which was under Admiral Gell, had sailed in the preceding month, the second started soon afterwards under Admiral Cosby, the third departed just before us under Admiral Hotham, and Lord Hood, with the main force, now brought up the rear.

Besides the *Victory*, our squadron was composed of six line-of-battle ships, five or six frigates, together with sloops, fire and hospital ships. The grandeur of the scene, then so new to me, and the feelings it excited, soon effaced the last lingers for home ; and, with a heart elate I beheld the sheen of the Isle of Wight gradually sink into the blue distance, and the boundless horizon appear, like an old friend, far away to the left. As the day drew on, the wind increased, and at about eight o'clock it had gradually veered round to S.W. by W., with thick, hazy weather, which rendered our passage down channel less pleasant.

I took refuge in the warm forgetfulness of my hammock, congratulating myself that I had not to keep the first watch. By a strange, though not a rare coincidence, my mind wandered back to the hateful days spent on board the slaver, and I was in my sleep once more writhing under the dreadful tyranny I there suffered, when suddenly the scene changed :—I seemed to hear the shouting and hallooing of the man-of-war's men, as on the morning of that sad catastrophe : the wild cries of "starboard," "port," were again ringing in my ears,—suddenly the same horrible concussion seemed to throw me on the deck. In a few seconds I awoke, to find that it was in truth something more than a dream. I was indeed lying on the deck, and in such agony from the blow I had received, that I could neither speak nor move. As soon as I regained the use of my limbs I jumped up, and, notwithstanding the motion of the ship, hastened to dress, in order, that I might repair on deck ; to which it seemed, by the noise, that every one was making a universal rush ; and this amid cries and oaths that brought the hideous subject of my vision more powerfully than ever to my recollection.

We had been run aboard upon the bow, by the ship next to windward, and which, entangled with our anchor, was still crashing alongside when I came up. The confusion was, as might be expected, sufficiently perplexing, but only, however, of brief duration, since we managed in a few minutes to get clear once more, though at the expense of our larboard cat-head, and, what was still worse, the springing of our bowsprit ; as well as a more trifling evil—the demolition of our figure-head. The carpenter had scarcely reported this, and we were still in the midst of wearing, when, in passing the *Victory's* weather quarter, we were hailed with "What ship is that ?"

“His Majesty’s ship the *Briton*,” replied the captain.

“Are you much hurt, Burgos?”

“Yes, sir, bowsprit badly sprung—cathead carried away.”

“Can you fish your bowsprit securely?”

“Hardly, I’m afraid.”

A brief pause ensued; and before we got fairly out of hearing, we could just distinguish the words—“You’ve Admiral’s leave—bear up—refit—all speed—rendezvous at Gibraltar.”

“Pleasant—pleasant—plaguily pleasant!” grumbled Captain Burgos. “What do fellows do in a fleet who don’t know how to steer? pack of lubberly bears—that is, when I say bears, mean nothing of the sort. Dare say the captain of that first-rate privateer, whoever she might have been, smart a fellow as ever lived, but still they must be confounded set of fools, d’ye comprehend. Mr. Clueline!—where’s the first lieutenant?”

“Forward, sir.”

“Tell him to look to that bowsprit, and get a temporary fish on it; and tell him to take the fore-top sail off her, and haul on board the main tack. Plague enough to be run down, without having to lose a night’s rest in the bargain! Where’s the master?—I want him.” And the skipper, who occasionally could take it as coolly as any man I ever knew, moved towards his cabin.

At this juncture, however, the surgeon came up hurriedly from below, and whispered to his superior in a low, serious tone, “I fear, sir, that Walters is dying.”

“Dying—dying—Walters! why, what d’ye mean?”

“Why, that Walters, sir, who happened to be in the head when we were run aboard a few seconds since, is so dreadfully crushed that he cannot live an hour.”

“Is it possible?—Never knew he was hurt! Where is he? Dying, dying, Doctor?—can’t let him die!—Walters, my coxswain!—where is he?—can’t let him die—that is, when I say die, he may die and be—hanged, stupid fellow! But still I can’t afford to lose my coxswain, d’ye comprehend?” And the captain hastened below to the cockpit with feelings of true kindness, notwithstanding his inconsistent mode of expressing himself.

The coxswain, poor fellow! was, however, under orders which not even a post-captain could supersede, and, as the

surgeon had predicted, within the sixty minutes was no more.

Perhaps the only act of kindness which he could have appreciated, was that which he received—a visit from his captain; the friendly clasp of whose hand he might have felt, though unable to return it. Understanding what would be uppermost in the seaman's mind, Burgos, who was much affected, promised to look after any friends he might leave behind. The sunshine of a smile struggled through the suffering expression of the poor fellow's countenance at this assurance; and in another instant, the last faint spark of animation had expired!

On the ensuing morning, it being my watch, I breakfasted in the cabin, and soon found the death of Walters had made a great impression. He had been with the captain in three successive ships, and besides the tie thus created and now broken, the good skipper was rather puzzled as to whom he should elect into the vacant office, which from its nature frequently becomes one of no slight trust.

"If I could only get such a fellow as Fluke's Joe Royal, Arran, I should do, eh?—a useful, handy sort of factotum,—not such a man in the ship, though."

On hearing this, I mentioned the half-restrained wish that old Joe had manifested to take a final ramble with me; so Captain Burgos, instantly catching at the idea, insisted on my posting out to the "Folly," as soon as the ship came to an anchor, which was expected in another hour—make the offer to honest Joe, and entreat the old admiral's leave to allow of his complying with it.

In truth, this was an event for which I had hardly dared to hope. Judge, then, of my surprise, when, on my arrival at the admiral's, I found the negociation prepared as it were, all ready to my hand.

Whether the admiral had taken offence at Joe's wish to roam, and wanted to punish him with the heaviest affliction of a poor mortal—the attainment of his desires, or whether his mind was as susceptible of change as the royal corporal's, I know not; but, on my proposing the affair, after the first burst of surprise at my appearance, the admiral made scarcely any objection, and Joe embraced my offer with eagerness; having, however, engaged, before he embarked, that he should be free to gain his discharge whenever he thought fit.

In consideration of my character as ambassador on this high occasion, I was allowed to sleep twice at the “Folly,” and, on again taking leave of the admiral, now left solely under the charge of Dickson, I once more received, for the hundredth time, the most unbounded assurances of regard, with many injunctions to prepare, strengthen, and gird myself up, for the undertaking of the all-important memoirs.

Sincerely wishing to myself that the veteran might live till I voluntarily undertook the weighty task thus offered, I hastened Royal’s steps. The last-named worthy, in requital of the admiral’s good advice to me, strictly enjoined Dickson to take great care of the admiral.

Then the admiral held out his hand to me, saying, “Don’t let the faithful fellow come to harm ; he’s served us well, and now once more, God bless and keep ye, boy—and—if—if—if we shouldn’t meet—why, well, well,—you understand me—I know ye’ll think now and then of an old friend—give up all for the service, d’ye mark me ? and Charles, my boy ! ye’ll not forget the papers.”

The next morning found us once more on our way down channel, under full sail, and making the utmost speed to fall in with the commander-in-chief. All our wishes were, however, for some time destined to be ineffectual. The breeze, which had carried us clear of the channel, entirely failed on our arrival in the Bay of Biscay, on whose waters we were doomed to undergo all the horrors of a tedious calm.

With light and variable winds, we at length reached Gibraltar, but the admiral, we learnt, had sailed from this, the appointed rendezvous, for Toulon, whither he had left orders for us to follow. Remaining in this beautiful bay, therefore, no longer than was necessary for the obtaining of fresh water and provisions, we again put to sea, and, towards the end of August, succeeded in making our number to Lord Hood, and joining company with the Mediterranean fleet.

As we had expected, they were cruising off the port before named, and consisted of twenty line-of-battle ships, exclusive of small craft and frigates. Having run down to the Victory, we hove-to, and the captain’s barge was immediately piped away.

I must here remark, that on the joining of royal Joe Royal, to assume the important duties of captain’s coxwain and “factotum,” as he called it, the crew of his barge had been in some

slight degree remodelled ; Will Watch being appointed one of the stroke-oarsmen, and my humble self chosen to fill up the vacancy of midshipman of the boat ; my predecessor, Henry I——g, having exchanged into the C——, to the command of which his uncle had been appointed during our last cruise.

The men belonging to the boat in question were all tried hands ; followers of their captain, selected from many crews for their approved worth. This was a duty, therefore, which I might well consider myself very fortunate in obtaining, and take pleasure in discharging. The letter-bags which we had just brought out from England, having been handed in, we received the still more precious freight of our little skipper, and shoved off.

The captain having betaken himself up the side to find his way to the admiral's cabin, I followed to ensconce myself in the less dignified retreat of the midshipman's mess, the letters being previously, in my presence, delivered to one of the ship's clerks by Joe, in whose care I left the boat—Joe, in his turn, seeking out his friend the captain's steward, and consigning the charge to Will Watch.

Not long, however, were either of us allowed to enjoy the repose thus self-allowed, since our indefatigable little captain had got us an employment, honourable enough it is true, but one of no slight danger.

It seems that on the preceding day, the commander-in-chief had been visited by two French delegates from the departments of the Rhone, to concert with him on the best means of restoring royalty to France. These gentlemen expected to meet on board a similar deputation from Toulon, one of the chief towns in the department of Var. In this, however, they were disappointed, owing, we were given to understand, to a division of opinion which now distracted the inhabitants of the port ; for, though the majority were inclined to put themselves under English protection, they yet received the most vehement opposition from a powerful faction, led on by Rear-Admiral St. Julien, the second in command, he being supported in his conduct and sentiments, by nearly the whole of the French fleet. This consisted altogether of thirty sail of the line : though, fortunately, not more than seventeen of this number were reported ready for sea.

As a set-off in our favour, the first in command, Rear-Admiral Trogoff, had declared himself for royalty, and warmly

espoused any cause that was opposed to that of the existing government.

On learning these facts, therefore, from the Marseilles depu-ties from the Rhone department, Lord Hood thought it advisable to open some communication with the inhabitants of the port, before which we were now cruising; in order that he might effectually ascertain their sentiments and declare his own. As Captain Burgos was an officer who, despite of his eccentricities, was universally esteemed wherever his singleness of heart, good sense, and zeal for the service were known, his lordship communicated to him what was going on ashore, and, congratulating him on his opportune arrival, to share in the expected service, added, that as he had drawn up an invitation to the royalists of the two departments to place themselves under his protection, he should now despatch a boat to the shore with the same, and, turning round, gave orders that a crew might be selected for the service.

“ Needn’t take the trouble to do that—needn’t pick a crew. Mr. —,” said Captain Burgos, to the first lieutenant, pricking up his ears at this. “ My barge alongside, much at your service; I dare say I shall remain on board some little time longer, and can get a boat by signal at any time. ‘ Picked?’ i’ faith, not a better crew in the service! Not a man in the boat I haven’t known for five years. That is, when I say,—”

“ Thank ye, Burgos—the very thing”—said the admiral.

“ What officer has she in her?”

“ Midshipman, my lord.”

“ Ah! we’ll fling in a few arms, and send one of our lieutenants with the proper instructions.”

“ Happy and proud, my lord, to go myself.”

“ No, no, Burgos, we’ll not do the rogues too much honour—send for Mr. C—ke.”

This officer having accordingly made his appearance, and received his orders, descended into the boat, and gave the necessary directions for the steerage to Joe, who seemed to resume without the least trouble to himself, an office which, during his varied services, he had before held under Admiral Fluke, after having previously retired on the pension of the royal but amphibious corps to which he originally belonged.

With a fine fresh breeze in our favour, we hoisted sail, and soon stood in sufficiently near the land for our present purpose, when, lowering the lug, the lieutenant determined to await the

approach of night before attempting the entrance of the harbour.

The town of Toulon, as you will perceive by a single glance at the map, lies nearly east and west; and fronts the south side of the Mediterranean. As a sea-port, it is perhaps of as great importance to France as any in her possession; being, in fact, the only one from which she can at all times send forth a fleet upon the waters of the landlocked sea.

Nature, certainly, has not done as much for this harbourage as the possessors might wish, but still she has afforded just sufficient facilities for art to complete nearly all that it found wanting; and this with great ingenuity has accordingly been done. In one thing, no doubt, the universal mother has been kind, for if not as generous as she might have been, in affording shelter to the shipping, she has, at any rate, surrounded the town with such a perfect chain of semicircular heights, that no enemy, unpossessed of twenty thousand troops, and a victorious fleet, could long maintain its possession, even when once gained.

At the time that we first appeared off the port to treat for its possession, we had a very different idea of its capabilities, and but an imperfect knowledge of its localities. I must, however, endeavour to give you that previous knowledge that we had to obtain, or, I fear, you will be but poorly able to understand the description of our proceedings. As from the number of its harbours and forts, this is a place rather difficult to comprehend without beholding it, I shall merely give such a general outline as will rather assist you in your own conception of the spot than supply the want of the engineer's more precise plan.

The chief anchorage in this port is the outer road or harbour, situated on the right of the town, and formed by an embayment of the land to the west, having Cape Sepet on the outer or southern side, the heights of Balagnier on the left or western, and a chain of forts running round in connection from the one to the other. On the east side or entrance, this road has the objection of lying open to the heavy gales of that quarter; while the north or shore side is, of course, formed by the main land, lined also with batteries, the chief of which are, Fort Lamalque in the centre, *Grosse Tour* on the left, and the *Batterie du Cap Brun* on the right.

On the heights of Balagnier are situated the well-known forts of Balagnier and Aiguilette, and beyond these again lies

the inner and smaller road. Thus both these anchorages are commanded by this fortified and intervening height, and this you must bear in mind.

Farther westward and inland stand Forts Malbousquet and Missiey, opposite to which we have the inner side of the point terminated by *Grosse Tour*, and between these, farther back, we have the town of Toulon itself. From either end of the last sweep off two artificial piers, hollow in their construction, armed towards the sea with two very low and formidable batteries, and enclosing within their grasp a space of water known by the name of the inner harbour. This, though not large, is yet said to be capable of containing a fleet of from twenty-five to thirty men-of-war ; and, humanly speaking, may defy the blast of every wind that blows under heaven.

The entrance to this inner harbour is secured by a boom, and formed by a space of some twenty yards intervening betwixt the two ends of the artificial piers, from over the eastward of which impends a pair of sheers for the masting and dismasting of ships. No arrangements could certainly have been more judicious and complete than those which are here combined. Within this inaccessible little basin, as it were, the largest ships of the French navy may be, and have been, built, launched, rigged, fitted, manned, and provisioned ; and it is only necessary the boom should be unlocked to send forth upon the seas a splendid and powerful fleet, complete in every particular, and in every way worthy of—English capture !—for Britain rules the waves !

To the left of the inner harbour is the arsenal, with the various storehouses, before which lie all the small craft. Here also the timber is kept in seasoning, and these are likewise secured by a boom. On the other side, to the right, is the victualling department, together with the gunboats ; a spacious and noble quay connects the two extremities, and forms the back of the harbour, in the centre of which is a tower exactly fronting the entrance-boom ; while the town, like some good mother, surrounds the whole, and is in turn surrounded and commanded by its heights.

These last extend on the eastward, or right hand, through the *Porte d'Italie*, to the road of Hieres, and on the west or left, through the *Porte de France*, to the village and pass of Ollionles ; while in the centre of this almost impassable chain is posted a strong fort of the name of Pharon—from the *Mon-*

tagne de Pharon, whence the heights of Pharon. Such, then, is Toulon. The above description may at first seem puzzling, but draw the lines on paper according to the compass, and you cannot fail to have before you a pretty good view of the port. There are many other forts and positions, but these I must hope to make you comprehend as I proceed.

Having now delayed our progress until we heard three bells, or half-past nine, tolled faintly along the English line, we once more held on upon our course under the land, till such time as we could dash in among the French fleet, then lying at anchor in the outer road. As we bore fearlessly on, a dead silence reigning in the boat, and successively passed the huge ships of the enemy, looming that night through the shade with an additional air of gloomy grandeur, the eye and ear intuitively watched for the deadly flash and roar which would most likely be the first announcement of our detection, and, for aught we knew, perhaps its punishment.

Still I was far from insensible to the pride of such an hour. Favoured by the darkness of the night, and the freshness of the breeze that had gradually increased, our temporary commander had, it is true, been hitherto rewarded with the success which his skill and daring had so well deserved ; for not only did we pass throughout the French line, but actually arrived close abreast of the dock-yard without the slightest molestation. Here, however, a gun-boat suddenly ran us alongside, demanding "Qui va là ?"

"La barque de l'Amiral," replied C—e, in an authoritative tone, while I added, in an under voice, "Ecoutez là," to the men, already instructed in such a case to mutter a few words among themselves in any language the nearest they could muster to French. This ruse succeeded, and before we could hear more than the commencing "Je vous demande," in the reply of the French officers, the boats had brushed past each other ; while C—e, looking after his interrogator and seeing him continue his course outward, snapped his fingers and exclaimed, "Eh, bien, mon ami ! et j'en vous accorde—Bon soir ! Johnny Crapeau."

In a few minutes more we succeeded in getting alongside one of the dockyard wharfs, and C—e, taking two stout hands with him, left me in strict charge of the boat. He returned after an hour's absence with several citizens, bringing some provisions, which, together with our commander, we

received on board ; then shoving off a little way from the jetty where we had been lying, made the boat fast to a floating boom, preparatory to passing the night in her, which we were now told we should have to do, the committee of protection, from which we had just received a deputation, declining to see him until the morning.

CHAPTER XI.

THE royalists, however, though they afforded us no shelter for the night, still gave us no reason to complain of their treatment, since some fine fat capons, doubtless never destined for such a *petit souper*, together with the long French bread, or, as Jack called it, “ soft tack by the yard, by jingo !” gave us a very sufficient relish for the accompanying *vin de Bordeaux* ; the which, as the aforesaid Jack discarded it for a little true Cognac, was admitted, nevertheless, to be “ not such very bad vinegar after a long cruise.”

However, ample justice was certainly done to all of the viands thus procured, when, our appetites being somewhat appeased—and truly I had never before eaten a meal with such pleasure—as well as our good humour excited, the men began to while away the time with long yarns delivered in an under voice.

Nor in this respect was C—e behind any one of us. He soon discovered the droll vein of character concealed under the stiff and stately surface of Joe Royal, and began to draw him out accordingly. This to be sure was no very difficult matter to manage at any time, and the honest corporal was not likely to be particularly frigid at such a moment. So he spun his yarn, which was succeeded by humorous tales, till, one by one, we gradually dropped asleep, leaving the lookers-out to save us from auy surprise.

On the ensuing morning, at six o'clock, the remainder of our provisions were served out for breakfast ; after which, Lieutenant C—e perceived the signal, which announced, according to promise, that his presence was expected on shore. Making us land him once more in the Dockyard, he set off as before.

Hour after hour passed without his making his appearance, or sending either of his men down with any message, until, on the arrival of noon, I began to be alarmed.

I at length determined, however reluctantly, to leave Joe in charge of the boat, taking Watch with me, to see if I could hear any tidings of our envoy. We had not proceeded many steps, before our ears were saluted with the wild huzzaing of the mob. Thinking that this sounded rather ominous, we stepped aside until they passed; when, to my surprise, I beheld the lieutenant borne aloft on the shoulders of the people, who, dancing and shouting around him, thus conducted him in triumph to his boat, after having forcibly rescued him from arrest by some of the revolutionary party.

Finding the tide in our favour, we lost no time in launching on the stream, and springing from our concealment, hurried on with the crowd; while Will, in the fervour of his enthusiasm, snatched off his cap, and waving it aloft, cried out, "Now, my hearties! three cheers for old England."

No sooner was this said, than the two seamen belonging to our boat, and now preceding their lieutenant on foot, gave the French populace the preparatory "hip, hip," to which the huzza was vociferously added.

Having speedily gained our barge, the oars were out in a few seconds, and amid the joyful acclamations of the crowd, we pushed off for the fleet, which, despite of many dangers, we managed to reach just as the Victory's bell struck five (half-past two).

After so much exertion, it may readily be supposed that we were glad of a little rest and refreshment, having obtained which, we again departed for the town. Lieutenant C—e was now charged to bring off some special deputy from the department committee, in order that the various stipulations of the declarations signed in the morning, might be forthwith determined and ratified.

On our return to the enemy, we found a French frigate anchored in such a position, that great care was necessary to avoid being cut off. Thinking that the boldest plan would prove, as on the preceding night, the best, we steered directly for her, until such time as we could pass between her and the port, then giving way for the shore, contrived to land C—e, notwithstanding the continued and heavy fire, both of the frigate and an armed boat, which she had sent in chase of us.

On this occasion, we did not attempt to enter the harbour, but contented ourselves with taking refuge among the rocks which line the coast to Cape Sepet. Over these we proceeded to climb up, in the face of the enemy's fire, and reaching the city in safety, we brought off, on the ensuing evening, to the Victory, the object of his mission.

No time was now lost by Lord Hood, in fulfilling the promises he held forth ; and we learnt that Louis the Seventeenth had been declared king, by the royalist party on shore, who had hereupon taken the oath of allegiance. The commander-in-chief, on the strength of this, determined to land without delay, such forces as would be sufficient to take possession of the forts, which commanded the republican French fleet.

All our efforts were, however, too late to assist the Marseillaise, and the surrounding departments of the Rhone, they having already been obliged to submit to the conventional troops, under General Carteau ; the army of Italy, under General Lapoye, being, it was said, on the march for Toulon.

While every preparation was making on our part, the enemy were not idle, for Rear-Admiral St. Julien, ascertaining that it was our intention to take possession of the port, exerted himself with considerable vigour in manning the forts on the southern side of the greater road, by which he hoped to impede our entrance. On this, Lord Hood determined, if possible, to be beforehand, and attack Fort Lamalque ; which strong and principal position on the opposite side of the great road was speedily gained by Captain Elphinstone, at the head of some fifteen hundred men.

These were composed of such troops as were serving on board the fleet, together with the marines, and a few seamen, contributed by various ships. Among the last, the Briton was foremost in sending her quota, consisting of thirty seamen and twenty-two marines, to which, by particular request, Joe Royal, and several of his boat's crew, together with myself, were attached.

The fort in which we now found ourselves, and which Captain Elphinstone had been appointed to command, being, as I said, directly opposed to that held by St. Julien, the ships under his command were completely at the mercy of our guns. Orders were therefore issued to prepare for indulging his worship with a heavy cannonade, while a flag of truce was despatched to him, by way of warning, to say that he must

either order his fleet into the inner harbour, there to deliver up their powder and “munitions of war,” or stand the brunt of opposing his Majesty’s liege subjects.

This prompt conduct produced the desired effect. My gentleman immediately “drew in his horns,” and his ships quietly retreated into the appointed place of refuge, where their crews and officers, hastily landing, betook themselves off, as we then thought, to join the advancing republican army; while the British fleet securely took up the anchorage they had abandoned. Strangely enough, our quondam allies, the Spaniards, hove in sight, while these proceedings were going on, and their ships—seventeen of the line, besides frigates,—came to, close at hand, not long after we had brought up.

The first benefit which we received from these gentry, was a reinforcement at Fort Lamalgue, of some nine or ten hundred troops, which, however, even when combined with our own, did not swell our numbers to any inconvenient amount. Indeed, throughout the whole of our stay at Toulon, we found the duty extremely heavy, both from the paucity of men, and the long extended line of works which we were forced, from the nature of the place, to maintain—a chain of nearly sixteen miles in circumference.

To this difficulty was added, as the investment of the place by the enemy proceeded, the diversity of nations from which we were compelled to collect its garrison: a fact which might have been a source of amusement, had it not previously been one of distress. French, British, Spaniards, Piedmontese, Neapolitans, Sardinians, and Maltese, had all to be welded, as it were, into one weapon of defence, and to this motley group should have been added a very considerable number of Austrians, but for the proverbial perfidy of a court, whose conduct has obtained an eternal monument of infamy in the estimation of mankind; and this by a succession of the meanest acts that can disgrace a nation.

However, hard as our duty now was, it had that great charm, novelty; and no one ever heard any complaints from the English seamen, whose high spirits, great good temper, and willingness to be worked—ay, almost to death, if need be,—I have ever found beyond all praise! As for the British troops, they were in everlasting requisition; they behaved most gallantly, and, as is usual in such cases, invariably suffered most severely.

For the French royalists, they seemed to fight with halters round their necks, and in a protracted struggle, this is certainly no advantage.

But of all present, no one appeared more in his element than Joe Royal. A universal favourite, he seemed, in a lower grade, to have assumed the office of generalissimo ; and alternately helped to drill an awkward squad of Neapolitan recruits,—for some of the men they sent us were little better,—or, in his own jocular way, “put up” some of his more nautical brethren to the puzzling evolutions of the line. Among other honours now conferred upon him, was that of extraordinary orderly sergeant to Captain Elphinstone, in which capacity he was constantly to be seen, panting about with orders to the different posts.

As our allies, the Spaniards, evinced sufficient eagerness to share in any of the rewards which might be going, Rear-Admiral Gravina was appointed commander-in-chief of the land forces, and Rear-Admiral Goodall, governor of the town. Our next employment was that of driving the enemy—the advanced guard of Carteau’s army—from his post on a bridge of the little village of Ollioules. This post is distant five miles from the town, and the required service we performed under our naval general, Captain Elphinstone, with great credit.

Soon afterwards, however, the “good *sans culottes*” pressed on in much greater strength, both in the east and west, when some fresh reinforcements arrived under General Lord Mulgrave ; and we were also further assisted in our endeavours to defend the place, by the departure of four ships, the most useless of the French line ; in which were sent away, the five thousand seamen lately belonging to the fleet, and now grown very troublesome. For this act, however, prudent as it was, Lord Hood was afterwards much blamed.

While our hopes were now anxiously turned to Europe, for such succours as would enable us to hold out against the superior and increasing force of the besiegers, the latter lost no opportunity of adding to our annoyances ; and in the beginning of September, opened fire upon our shipping, from two new mortar batteries in the north west, which we opposed by ships of the line and armed rafts.

On the last day of this month, also, the enemy succeeded in surprising our position immediately over the town, on the

heights of Pharon. This, however, we regained on the ensuing day, with comparatively little loss to ourselves, though the enemy were reported to have suffered severely. On this day also, I received my first wound, which was, however, very slight, being merely a bullet graze, through the fleshy part of the left arm.

We had now been in the occupation of Toulon about two months, during which time we had received various reinforcements, though the whole of them were far from adequate to our wants, and we had sent away numerous squadrons from the fleet, until it amounted to no more than ten sail of the line, and those but half manned. At this inopportune moment a most serious quarrel was likely to have arisen between Lord Hood and the Spanish admiral, Langara.

It arose respecting General Valdez, who, it seems, had brought from Madrid an appointment to command the whole of the combined forces at Toulon. This appointment, however, the English vice-admiral refused to acknowledge; asserting on our part, that the port had put itself under our protection, and that a General O'Hara had been named to the command of the forces now acting on shore, and would immediately arrive.

On this, Langara, thinking to intimidate his lordship, surrounded the Victory with some of the heaviest ships belonging to his fleet. But it was all in vain, the spirit of John Bullism was too strong for the Don, and General O'Hara, on his arrival, assumed his proper function; while Lord Hood, to supply as well as he could the deficiency in his fleet, obtained a considerable supply of seamen from the island of Malta.

It was at this period that we heard, with the deepest sorrow, of the sanguinary deed that filled up the measure of revolutionary madness in France. The princely-born—the young—the lovely and devoted Marie Antoinette, had been immolated on the scaffold, yet reeking with her husband's blood!

The news of this revolting outrage was, if I rightly remember, brought from Paris by General Dugommier, who arrived to conduct the siege; the sudden termination of which, though little anticipated by us, was now by fate brought close at hand. The first serious notification which we had of this change of commanders, was an attack upon Fort Mulgrave,—

a fort which we had ourselves constructed with great pains; and which, on account of its impregnable nature, was called "Little Gibraltar."

The first attack on this post, and which, by the by, afterwards turned out to have originated as much from accident as design, was but partially successful. The Spaniards, on whom the brunt of the fire fell, at first retreated; but General O'Hara coming up, ordered a company of the Royals to support them, and we succeeded in putting the republicans to flight.

We were not, however, allowed to enjoy the services of this valuable officer long. A masked battery,—or rather, one, the construction of which had been concealed by a small olive wood,—having suddenly opened on Fort Malbousquet, a corps of two thousand three hundred men, under Major General Dundas, was ordered to take possession of it by sortie.

This battery had been planted to the north-westward on the left of the republican army, which there consisted of about eight thousand men, occupying a line from Fort Rouge to Malbousquet, and much scattered.

An hour before daylight we left the town, and after a toilsome and most difficult ascent of the heights, found but too little difficulty in driving back the foe. Led on by the ease with which we had succeeded, we pursued the enemy towards a second rising ground, situated inside the first battery, the primary object of our attack.

At this juncture, we heard the drums roll out the *generale* from Dugommier's main body, which lay on our left; on hearing which, Joe Royal, who was in full pursuit behind me, roared out at the topmost pitch of his lungs, "Halt, sir! halt! —Mr. Arran! —halt! Look, sir, we're cut off! —Call them back, sir, call them back, or they're prisoners or dead men every Jack of them!"

Many of our troops, originally composed of detachments from the various nations before named, had now, I perceived, formed on either side of the first redoubt; but these consisted, I thought, mostly of Spaniards and Neapolitans; the whole of the British, and the greater part of the French royalists being in hot pursuit of the republicans. Suddenly I perceived stealing along, with only their heads above ground, a detachment of the enemy, who, led on by a young and apparently insignificant officer, suddenly started up, as if from the

bowels of the earth, and poured in a heavy fire on the combined troops, right and left.

Being partly hidden by some brambles growing close to our lately recovered battery, General O'Hara, who had just come up from the town, and now saw from a distance the effect of their volleys, conceived that they must be some of our own men firing on their brother soldiers from mistake. He therefore rushed forward. In the next moment I had the mortification of beholding his sword arm drop by his side from a musket wound, and a sergeant rushing on him, dragged our unfortunate chief down.

"Hurrah! here, my tars, to the general's rescue!" shouted old Joe, who had witnessed this fatal finale, as he was coming up to me after having recovered a few of his immediate party.

"A rescue! a rescue! my boys!" repeated Will Watch.

"Huzza! the general's rescue!" re-echoed all, and we dashed forward.

"—— Le Général Anglois à l'arrière garde!" I heard the little French officer cry, as he waved his sword on our approach—then addressing the main body of his men with some other order, they came suddenly round on the left wheel, and poured in a heavy volley.

At this moment, our little corps, which did not altogether amount to twelve men, instead of taking the enemy as we thought on the flank, received, at not fifteen yards' distance, the fire of an extended line of some thirty men. Seven poor fellows sunk never to rise again; all of us were wounded more or less, and one so severely that we were unable to bring him off the field.

By this time the general had been dragged behind the cover of the second little post, the prospect of taking which had proved so fatal. Stragglers were flying in every direction around us, the first redoubt was in the possession of our foes, already busily employed in sweeping us down with some of its recaptured guns; and, to crown our misfortunes, we beheld the main body, under Dugommier, in rapid motion, to cut us off from the town.

"—— those French! they haven't left a fellow a pin to stand upon," exclaimed old Joe. "Come, Mr. Arran, next to fighting well is retreating well, as your uncle used to say; and if we don't make off, they'll soon make off with us."

"That's true, Joe," I replied; and seeing that no wiser course was left us, we hurried to join a larger body of our comrades in full retreat towards the city. In doing this, we had nearly broken our necks in a smaller sort of trench or boyau, which I now perceived to have been the destructive communication between the two redoubts, into which the general had seemed so strangely dragged, and which had consequently been the means of effecting our misfortunes.

In an instant Joe leapt into this, and, beckoning us to do the same, whispered, "We may as well discharge our muskets, sir, before we go aboard." With this, the active old corporal sherryed on, while I followed.

"Now, my boys!" muttered Joe, on our arriving under the lee of the brambles,—"Everything in a pig's whisper—every man to his own aim. Pink the officers first, 'cause they've a right to the extinction—then away, slap over all!—don't be afraid to use your butt ends well,—and right aboard!—devil take the hindmost!"

With this last equivalent for *Vivat Rex*, we all cocked our pieces, and rising up slowly from amongst the thorns, poured our fire into the rear-works of these gentry, just as we observed them discharge several of their guns against our friends in front;—then, before they could recover from their surprise, we dashed through, knocked down right and left, leapt the embrasures, and scuddled to the retreating remnant of the combined forces.

This sad day's work was undoubtedly the beginning of our reverses at Toulon. It was with great difficulty that we again got shelter, and, on mustering the refugees, we were found to have lost, in killed and wounded, nearly one half of the number originally employed. Nor was our mortification much lessened, by considering that we owed this to the headlong impetuosity of British troops, and the advantage to which it was so skilfully turned by the little artillery officer. We soon had cause to learn the name of this *jeune homme*, and after-circumstances familiarised it somewhat on our tongues;—it was Napoleon Buonaparte!

CHAPTER XII.

THE check thus given to us seemed to infuse new life and spirits into our opponents, and some fresh corps having joined the republican army, it was determined, at a council of war, to make a grand attack on the key of our present position—Fort Mulgrave. This plan originated solely with Buonaparte, who maintained that, once possessed of “Little Gibraltar,” he would in four days regain Toulon. Accordingly, within a fortnight of the taking of General O’Hara, the enemy succeeded in throwing up several heavy gun and mortar batteries, and, after an incessant bombardment of eight-and-forty hours, the French formed in two columns, and prepared to storm our hold.

The night selected for this service was, in truth, well suited to such a scene of carnage. The rain came down in torrents: the night so pitch dark that none of the enemy’s movements could be seen, and the bitter biting cold of December’s blast, inclined me for anything as much as fighting. This morning also, the seventeenth of December, was the sad anniversary of my poor father’s death; and I thought it was far from improbable, that my hour was arrived for following him to the gloomy tomb.

These disagreeable and natural, but bootless reveries, were put to flight by the quick running sound of musketry, which the fitful storm allowed to reach my ear, and which ushered in the more deadly fire, covering the attack on Little Gibraltar. This overture proceeded from our troops. For the garrison of this fort being stationed somewhat in its rear, to avoid, if possible, the tremendous bombardment of the last few days, it had become necessary to throw out a line of skirmishers in front. These, on being driven in by the advance of the French columns, thus gave notice to their comrades above to support their retreat, by the occupation of the fort itself, for whose possession so much blood was to be spilt.

It is scarcely possible to conceive a more deadly and determined struggle than the one which now took place. The enemy’s leading column was headed, not by the popular repre-

sentatives, as was afterwards reported, but by Dugommier himself; notwithstanding the wound he had received but a few days before. The deafening roar of the artillery, now playing over the heads of the assailants, and showering destruction on those of the defenders, mingling with the howling of the gale, the screams of those who fell, and the exulting shouts of such as fortune favoured, rose on the ear like a concert of the doomed, and presented to the imagination the completion of the grand but horrid picture, which the intermitting glare of death imperfectly revealed.

While the fort was thus defended with such obstinacy, and fortune seemed as likely to favour one side as the other, the enemy's cannonade suddenly slackened; Dugommier in an agony of anxiety and despair was obliged slightly to give way—*even while urging his men to redouble their efforts.*

At this crisis, a Captain Muiron, of the artillery, second in command to Buonaparte, supported by his chief, and perfectly acquainted with the position, found his way up the height unobserved; here, debouching at the foot of the fort, he rushed with his party through an embrasure. The step was decisive; thus attacked in front and rear, the gallant Captain C——y, with his Royal Irish, were, after a most sanguinary stand, compelled to retreat to the flanking redoubt of Balagnier; while Dugommier and Buonaparte were left in possession of the coveted point, for which they had staked all, and possessed of which, the latter had asserted himself to be sure of the city:—we shall see.

Certain it is, we could not have seen it with the same eyes, or we should not have left it garrisoned with something less than eight hundred men.

While these were the proceedings at Fort Mulgrave, much the same was enacted at my station. My picket being driven in soon after the attack opened on Little Gibraltar, we had to fall back on the main body, this last being obliged to retreat before a far superior force; so that morning dawned to find our lines effectually forced by the foe, and the two most important points, the heights of Balagnier and Pharon, in the complete possession of the republicans. The whole number of our garrison now amounting to a little more than a fifth of our antagonists, we were evidently too weak to attempt regaining what we had lost, and too wise to await the further and inevitable evils of reverses already sustained.

Such ships, therefore, as were threatened by the guns we had so lately planted, now weighed and stood out of danger.

A grand council of war was summoned on the instant by Lord Hood ; it was attended by all the principal officers of the combined forces, and within eighteen hours of the taking of Fort Mulgrave, they resolved, without one dissentient voice, on the immediate evacuation of Toulon. To the unfortunate inhabitants, such a disastrous event seemed doubly terrible and sudden ; and those, who but a brief space since, were warranted in contemplating a victorious sortie into deserted Provence, could now alone hope for safety in foreign exile, aggravated by the anguish of ties for ever severed, and the despair of fortunes irretrievably destroyed !

To Captain Elphinstone, whose services had proved so valuable, was entrusted the embarkation of the troops and inhabitants, in which he was assisted by Burgos, and one or two of his brother captains. Admiral Langara volunteered to destroy such of the French line as we could not bring off, while Sir S——y S——th solicited and obtained the trust of firing the arsenal and magazines.

This officer had but lately joined the fleet ; but we had heard his gallantry much commended, and honest Joe having informed me that he was one of my uncle's midshipmen, I determined, since my "sojering" on shore was over, to get myself under his orders.

Having obtained the captain's leave, I offered him the services of myself and boat's crew ; these he was pleased very kindly to accept, and slapping Joe on the back, demanded how the war had gone with him since they last parted.

"Ay, ay, sir, there's a crack in the old whip yet !" answered Joe, "and now I think of it, sir, I may make so bold, perhaps, as to return you the fire, for they tell me you're turning out a rare smart hand, sir, and I wish ye joy of it !"

"What, master Joe!—the same saucy-tongued knave that ever you were ! Well, take care, sirrah, that you roast the French to-night."

"Ay, ay, sir, leave me alone for that ; one good tnrn deserves another. They've peppered my old drumsticks as if they were going to make a grill of 'em, so never fear my roasting their sirloins !"

This was now the morning of the eighteenth, and the troops having been withdrawn from the various outposts, were con-

centrated within fort La Malgue, whence they were to embark. The foreign troops in Malbosquet and Missiey having taken leave to decamp and go on board their ships in detail, while the council were yet sitting on the preceding night.

One or two of my boat's crew having been shot, and several wounded too severely to resume their duties, I obtained men to supply their places, and reporting myself to Sir S——y on board his little tender, we proceeded to our fun at the dock-yard. There setting to work, we prepared the requisites for burning the enemy's stores and shipping, with all the glee which animates a group of children about to do honour to that hero of plots—Guy Fawkes.

Gun-boats had, in the meanwhile, been stationed in various parts of the harbour, to keep at bay the enemy without, and the republicans within. To their tumultuous numbers were also added some thousands of the galley-slaves, freed but a few hours since from well-deserved chains, and impatient of those, whose presence delayed the general massacre and pillage which was to crown the scene.

Too soon were they let loose upon this devoted city. At a quarter to ten, everything being in readiness, the fiat of destruction was given. Three rockets ascended from the dockyard, the trains were fired, the bruleaux previously laid athwart hawse of the French line, sent forth a lambent pyramid of flame ; and by this fierce and ruddy glare, the troops commenced their final embarkation, from a shore they had defended so gallantly, though in vain !

A strong south-west wind, or as the Toulonese term it, a libeccchio, was setting in ; increasing, as the morning drew on, to a perfect gale. Thus fanned, the terrific element leapt from ship to ship with indescribable fury and rapidity.

Ten or twelve ships of the line were soon in a complete blaze : the flames rushing out of their ports, and giving to distinct view the dark lines of their masts and rigging ; while the various boats of the fleet busied in this work of destruction, together with the transports receiving troops, became equally visible in the lurid glare thus cast upon the sea. The surface of the last seemed lashed into universal foam, by the deadly hail now falling with redoubled fury and more unerring aim ; as the enemy's encircling lines narrowed round the town, and to his former fire was added that of Malbosquet.

The first explosion which thundered forth above the already

deafening ~~din~~, was that occasioned by the blowing up of Fort Poné, at about ten o'clock. This was succeeded by several of minor note, which passed unheeded in the general roar. Soon, however, one awful concussion appeared to have quelled all. It seemed as if nature, to mock at man's idea of ruin, was about to rend the elements, and give back earth to its primeval chaos—so tremendous was the blast! After a moment's pause, however, friend and foe seemed by mutual and tacit consent to recognise the circumstance as one of human agency, and again plied the reluctant cannon in the work of slaughter.

We soon found that this 'nine' seconds' wonder was the result of Spanish sloth and knavery. Instead of scuttling the two powder vessels containing the entire ammunition of the French fleet, they had thought proper to set them on fire. The result was, the destruction of two British gunboats, and the loss of three or four of their crews.

Having fired the trains under his care, and executed the various charges at the dockyard, Sir S——y ordered us all into our boats once more, and led the way to the basin; on the eastern side. Here we were to have set on fire five or six ships of the line: one of eighty guns, and another of a hundred and twenty, which the Spaniards had pretended they were unable to burn. Had they been crammed with powder, and lying in the centre of our fleet, less difficulty would perhaps have been found by our trusty and well-beloved allies.

The first obstacle that presented itself to our progress was the large boom swung across the entrance and chained. This we vainly strove to disengage, though subject all the while to the most destructive fire of musketry, from such of the republicans as had already entered the town, in front of which we were now lying. Some of us tried to row directly over the spar, and were nearly swamped in the attempt; other dashing at it, to break the chains if possible by main force, promised fair to stave in their boats' bows; when Sir S——y, seeing that the thing was impracticable, ordered us to desist and follow him towards two of the French line. These were lying nearly abreast of the basin, in a detached position; and being filled with prisoners, had not of course been fired. Having, in common with the other vessels, been deprived of their ammunition, they were unable to commit any aggression, but had, nevertheless, refused to surrender up their ships. By this time, however, they had felt enough of such a hot fire to

jump at our commander's humane offer of a safe landing. Setting to with a will, therefore, we soon cleared their decks of live lumber, and consigned them a further prey to the never satiated god of fire.

Our efforts in the glorious work of devastation were now nearly completed; and I having landed my cargo of French prisoners outside the eastern pier of the basin, was about to return on board, when there suddenly sprang upon us, from the shadow in which he had been concealed, a poor wretch—more like an envoy from the lower regions than anything I ever yet beheld! His eyes were starting out of his head with the most ghastly horror, his woolly scalp was gashed in every direction and running with blood, and his clothes so hacked and hewed, that they streamed in tatters from his lacerated body. This object, which was indeed a poor unhappy negro, flung himself on his knees before me, and, wringing his hands, which contained a broken sword-hilt, yelled forth in accents of agony and despair, “O venez, Monsieur Anglois! venez, pour la grace de Dieu! Me massa—him murdered—me massa—sa femme—sa fille.” I waited for no more. Fired by the object kneeling at my feet, and roused by the mention of such names—I thought of a mother and a sister; ties on which I had often loved to muse, but never had been blessed to know. Turning to my crew with feelings that denied me utterance, I could only wave my sword as a signal for them to follow, and sprang on.

Perhaps I did more by this simple action—the result of impulse which had outstripped discretion—than if I had made them the most studied harangue; for seemingly impressed with the importance of the service which only permitted such a summons, my brave fellows were in an instant around me, their bright cutlasses beaming aloft in the light of the surrounding conflagration, and their active steps keeping well up with the fear-winged feet of our sable guide.

After darting through three or four small streets deserted by all save the dead and dying over whom we trod, a sudden angle brought us full upon a small mob, composed chiefly of the liberated galley-slaves and other refuse of the people. They were surrounding what appeared to have been but lately a noble mansion. It was now, however, tenanted by guests of the same description as those who strove outside. From the higher tier of windows, the flames were bursting in uncov-

trolled emulation of the scene afloat, while from the lower story, the demons of the hour were hurling to the ground the costly and splendid furniture that, but a few hours previous, had conduced to the comfort of a family, rich in honour, wealth, and rank. Where were we to look for the late happy owners of this devastated palace? They were yet warm upon its threshold!

Prostrate on the last flight of steps leading to the entrance door, and supported by a little pyramid of slain, formed by his trusty servants, we found Don L * *, pierced with fifty wounds. His wife had swooned upon the body, and the excess of light discovered to our view the figure of a young female. Half beaten to the ground beneath her father's portal, her knee resting on the body of her mother, whose head she had endeavoured to shield with one arm, while a small poniard glittered in the other, we arrived just in time to see a ferocious and blood-stained slave, wrench from her ear the gem that tempted his cupidity. "Huzza!" was the spontaneous cry which burst from one and all, as we sprang like tigers on our prey. In another instant, I felt—with a joy on which I will not dwell—the gliding of my sword through the villain's neck, and pressing down the body with my foot, received the falling form of her whose life I saved.

What was the rapture of the moment! It left its trace upon the crowded acts of after life! Scarcely known to him who felt its influence, and never by mere words to be recorded! As those full and dazzling arms so lately nerved with superhuman heroism, hung lifeless round my neck, I felt that I would not have bartered my fair prize for all the world contained.

To lift my lovely burden up, and bear her back towards the boat, before the rallying of the crowd we had put to flight, was the work of an instant. Then pointing out the bodies of Don L * * and his wife to my crew, I offered a reward of ten guineas to any man who would bring either of them to the boat. "Wil Watch, you lead the way to the shore as the negro points it out. Royal, my fine fellow, do you bring up the rear; but don't get involved with the villains if it can be helped."

We now set off with all the haste we could possibly make, but I soon found, light as was the weight I carried, it was

taxing my strength to the utmost ;—I would not, however, yield the honour or share it with any one.

Hitherto, every step of our way had been fraught with the most imminent peril. The shouting of the baffled mob who followed in our rear, the falling of the shells in our path, and the rebounding of the cannon shot—which clattered about in all directions, often covering us with rubbish struck from the adjoining houses, together with the fearful yells of the fugitives, whose flying footsteps were dogged by the revengeful republicans, all combined to give us a taste of the horrors of the town, different from, it is true, but not less frightful than those we had left afloat.

To the last, however, we were glad enough to return ; and succeeded in shoving off our barge, just as the bloodthirsty wretches from whose fangs we had escaped, rushed down to the beach in tenfold numbers. Being chiefly armed with poles, pikes, and iron bars, they found us beyond their reach, and were obliged to content themselves with the most horrible imprecations, and—like other and less culpable savages—with a shower of stones. When these came rattling into the boat, we replied by a shout of laughter, and as no one was seriously hurt, scarcely took any further notice than that of rowing off to the fleet as quickly as possible.

My first thought was now to pour a little brandy down the throats of my new friends,—but Don L * * had, alas ! bade a final adieu, alike to human friendship or enmity ! In the other three cases, however, that of the mother, the daughter, and the poor negro, the spirit was, indeed, *eau de vie*.

On reaching the old Briton, we were so much exhausted that we could scarcely crawl up the side. I nevertheless saw my charge safely on board, and then hastened to report myself to Captain Burgos. A great number of the Toulonese were already on board, but with his usual kindness he instantly gave up his inner cabin to the wounded lady and her daughter. Then, after commanding, in his own queer way, my conduct throughout “the various and complicated duties of the siege,” he told me that I had fully earned my epaulette, and that he hoped soon to see me wearing it.

I own I felt gratified at this assurance of having done my duty, but with regard to my promotion, the good old admiral had promised that I should get that as speedily as it was

possible to be obtained ; and I confess that I often felt a painful sensation, not far from self-humiliation, as I jostled against old, able, and experienced midshipmen, over whose heads I knew that I was to be rapidly passed, simply because fortuitous connection on my part, outweighed long-neglected worth on theirs.

After receiving the encomium of Captain Burgos, I sought the surgeon,—he was, however, busy with the Spanish lady, and the assistant having assured me that Don L * * had been dead for the last hour and a half, it was thought advisable to read a prayer over the body and commit it to the deep, to which boundless tomb it was soon followed by the faithful negro, who, on the succeeding night, died of his wounds. On the ensuing morning, Captain Burgos repaired on board from the admiral with sailing orders. The Briton having been much damaged during the siege, and being otherwise in great need of thorough repairs, we were ordered to convoy home the transports containing the sick and wounded, and for this purpose, at twenty minutes past eleven, we filled and bore away.

Thus ended the memorable and much-abused assumption and evacuation of Toulon. It was my first initiation into the grand art and mystery of war, and in truth it may be considered to have been no poor one, when we remember that the words of the commission generally ran,—“ *To burn,—blast,—sink,—and destroy !* ”

I have often thought, too, with a feeling somewhat allied to pride, that this was the only theatre in which were ever personally engaged four men, whose fates in after life continued at cross-issue to the last :—namely, Captain Elphinstone, (afterwards Lord Keith,) Sir S——y S——th, Napoleon Buonaparte, and Captain Horatio Nelson. The last officer, it is true, had no opportunity of distinguishing himself at this juncture ; since the Agamemnon was despatched on a special mission to Naples, soon after the arrival of Lord Hood off the port.

The favourite son of Fortune had now first begun to be owned by his capricious parent ; and we all had to bow to his genius. Too soon, however, were her smiles changed to frowns ; and he lived long enough to afford to each and all, a separate and sufficient triumph ! Of these, I am sorry to say, that of my old commander, Lord Keith, was the most vindictive and ungenerous !

CHAPTER XIII.

DURING the time I had been at Toulon, I had received more than one letter from the “Folly:” they were always expressive of the utmost kindness, and contained whatever news happened to be going. From these, I learnt that Lord Howe had sailed on the 14th of the preceding July, from St. Helen’s: having under his command the Channel fleet, amounting to fifteen sail of the line. Cruising off Belle-Isle on the 31st, he here, for a short time, fell in with the first republican French fleet which had appeared at sea.

His lordship, it seems, after vainly endeavouring to bring on an engagement, cast anchor in Torbay on the 10th of August; while the French, who were commanded by M. Morard-de-Galles, and enumerated seventeen sail of the line, were compelled, by a mutiny in their fleet, to return into Brest. The existence of this fleet naturally gave rise to much speculation in the minds of us young aspirants for naval glory, and having recently demolished one in the very ports of the enemy, we began to calculate on the chances of destroying another upon the open sea.

In the meanwhile, the two unhappy cabin passengers, whose lives I had been the means of preserving in so strange a manner, gradually rallied from the dreadful load that bade so fair to weigh them down, and in return for the little service I had been so fortunate as to render them, frequently requested that the captain would allow them to send for me. The after-cabin having been divided into two, by a curtain, the mother, who had not yet recovered from the wounds of that dreadful night, emerged towards evening, from the recess in which her cot was suspended; and, being gently laid on a sofa by the window, indulged herself with gazing out upon the sea, over whose waves, the setting sun poured its rich flood of crimson and of gold.

At these times it was but too easy to perceive how deeply she brooded over her recent losses. As the tears trickled slowly down a face where the twilight of beauty was yet lingering, she would frequently exclaim—“Why meddle—why

have rendered thyself obnoxious—why have espoused the cause of a family from whom thou hadst suffered nothing but wrong!”—as if she shared the sentiment of the sorrowing spouse of Protesilaus—“Hei mihi, quām multis flebilis ulti-
eris!” But, alas! with her it was no longer the future she dreaded, but the past which she deplored.

For some time after they had learnt the decease of Don L * *, both mother and daughter seemed heedless to what clime or country we might bear them; while we, on our part, had no choice to offer. From the hour of their arrival on board, till some days after we had left the fleet, they continued in a state which precluded the intrusion of any questions. We only felt that the deepest distress had thrown them upon our protection, and without knowing whether the incoherent ravings of their slave had been correct, we gave them all that it was in our power to bestow, a shelter and a home.

By degrees, as the energies of the daughter rallied, the shyness at first observable in her character wore away; and finding the necessity of friendship in affliction, her heart naturally expanded towards one whose years very nearly approached her own, and whose feelings offered that degree of congeniality, which ever produces the strongest tie. To these were added impulses more powerful than all—gratitude and pity. With a veil so soft as these, thrown over all she said or did, it seemed as natural in Cornelia (for so I shall call her, though this was not her name), it seemed as natural, I say, in Cornelia to confide, as in Charles Arran to sympathize.

I soon learnt her history: one peculiarly calculated to make an impression on the mind. Her father was a Spaniard of high rank and considerable possessions in Andalusia; in the capital of which province she was born. At an early age he had espoused her surviving parent, daughter of the then French ambassador at Madrid. This connection adding to his influence at court, finally secured to him a rich governorship, together with an important part in the administration, and other honours. Being, however, of a proud and unbending, though honourable disposition, as well as extremely irascible, he soon got deeply involved in the political intrigues of the day, and coming under the notice of the inquisition, was obliged to fly for his life. By the exertion of great interest, he managed to preserve his property from confiscation, and converting it into money, pur-

chased a beautiful estate in Provence ; vowing in his anger, never again to behold his native land.

Of too active a mind to find happiness in the unsullied flow of a country life, and of too haughty a temperament to be seen at Paris in the character of what he considered a fallen man, the atmosphere of a city seemed nevertheless essential to his happiness. He, therefore, purchased and fitted up a superb mansion at Toulon—the sad destruction of which I had witnessed. Here, during nine months of the year, he was in the habit of residing.

Having, on his return from one of the loyal committees, been mobbed, and severely beaten, he was attacked by a violent fever, and confined to his bed. Hurried from this, in a state hardly convalescent, to prepare for the sudden evacuation of the town, and save what wreck of property yet remained to him, he hardly knew which way to turn.

His new estates in Provence were hastily made over to a republican, for one-twentieth of their value ; and with a few bills on London, he only waited for the cover of night, to seek protection on board the nearest British man-of-war. This, however, we have already seen was not to be : his life and death seeming to point him out, as one of a class too often met—men whose whole existence has been one continuous mistake.

The saddest part of his story, however, yet remains for our consideration. His wife and child !—Nursed in splendour, and hitherto ignorant of aught belonging to misfortune, save its name—how was the cruel blast of adversity to be averted from them ?—“God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,” is the divine expression of Sterne, and in this was their only hope. The pocket-book containing the English bills had been found on the person of the unhappy Spaniard, and if their amount—a hundred and forty thousand francs—should be duly paid on presentation, it would at least preserve them from want : though it could not fail to expose them, in such a country as England, to the pangs of comparative poverty.

Respecting the payment of these, I had my fears ; but was sure that on our arrival at Spithead, the benevolent admiral would insist on affording them a temporary asylum, until the final arrangement of their affairs. In this scheme too I contemplated—I know not why—the gratification which

Cornelia's society would afford to him. Her passionate regard would, I was assured, be instantly won by the noble character of the old veteran; on whose warm heart disappointment's icy finger had left just shade sufficient to bring out all its beauties with a tenfold light. So gentle, yet so deep, she seemed some lovely flower of the desert; her beauties owing all to nature's culture, and her faults, if such she had, mere imperfections of that soil which alone could have given birth to charms like hers.

Timid and shrinking in the ordinary transactions of life, yet fearless in acting the part which she at once conceived to be right; averse to the society of the many, but devoted where her affections were once excited; singularly mistrustful of her opinion and attractions, yet uniting every variety of information and accomplishment with a person the most fascinating, the superficial frivolity of her mother came not near her; while from her father, she did but inherit the pride that would have aimed at conceiving what was great. The genius, and the courage which ensure its execution, were all her own. Such is a faint, unworthy outline of Cornelia—to love her was fatal; but to see her—was, alas, to love!

Absorbed in the host of new and delightful emotions, of which the lovely Spaniard had become the vertex, there was one bereavement which fell upon me comparatively unfelt. But one brief month before, and I could not have believed it!—But some brief months to come, and how bitterly did I reproach myself with the fact!

If ever I was acquainted with one of my own sex whom I might call "a beloved friend," it was Miles. Some hasty words uttered by the first lieutenant, coupled with the circumstance of the ship being about to return to England, had induced him to effect an exchange with one of the **'s; which ship was to remain with Lord Hood; and thus in the hopes of a speedy meeting, and with many mutual assurances of regard, we parted.

The young officer whom we received in Miles's stead, was a tall, fine-looking fellow; but there was in his dark countenance something to which I vainly endeavoured to reconcile myself. His family had originally been partly of Spanish blood, and still possessed, we were told, some property on the Biscayan coast. From the first hour of his joining he either felt or affected—too well I now know which—a deep friendship for

myself. But I had already been too much deceived on this score to take so readily again. Still there was something about Kerslake's manner, which, though you did not like the man, still left you with the idea that you were flattered by his regard. This feeling it was, which prevented his being shaken off by any one on whom he had fixed for a victim. Moreover, I knew nothing of his principles, these he ever kept in the greatest obscurity, and from these I had been taught, and too bitterly had learned, that every true inference of character was to be drawn.

At the mouth of the Channel we encountered a severe north-easterly gale, which not only delayed us on our passage, but by the buffeting which it gave us, opened our seams to such a degree, that Captain Burgos thought it most prudent to put into Plymouth, and get them caulked. I never complain of any mischance which presents new objects to my view. I was sufficiently glad, therefore, of the opportunity which enabled me to see this seaport; so infinitely preferable to Portsmouth.

On arriving in the Sound—which, though somewhat exposed, is still a noble anchorage—Joe seemed quite at home, and with much delight, and no slight self-importance, pointed out whatever was notable.

In a few days we were enabled to sail for Spithead. Having communicated to Captain Burgos my designs on the “Folly,” he settled his fair passengers, now nearly recovered, at a hotel, until such time as I could obtain the admiral’s answer. For this purpose I lost no time in presenting myself before my revered old friend. At the moment of my arrival, I was sorry to hear that he was busy with one of the disciples of Galen. My fears were, however, quickly dispelled by hearing him cry out in a loud hearty tone, as he recognised my voice in the passage,—

“Charles, my boy! what, home again?—In with ye—in with ye here—make sail!”

I accordingly entered, and found the admiral’s wrist between the fingers of his attendant, an old shipmate who resided near the Folly, and deemed the admiral’s occasional fees no disagreeable addition to his half-pay.

“Well, doctor, what d’ye say to it?—is it a good pulse?”

“Yes, admiral, a very good pulse.”

“What, doctor, a full and soft pulse?—Not wiry, eh?”

"Just so, admiral, very soft, and quite full enough for your age, sir."

"Why,—ye sir! Ugh, ugh!—I was going to swear at ye—musn't swear, Charles,—why, ye unmannered dog! for what age d'ye take me—the age of Methuselah! Why, you old filler of gallipots and roller of pills, I'm only just seventy-three!—Hah!—there's that old fellow Royal just walked in: I heard his footstep—swear to it among a thousand—walks like a whale—where's your hand, Royal?" extending his own to grasp that of the Corporal. "How d'ye weather it, ye old horse, eh? So, so, doctor, stay a moment. Don't trip just this instant"—catching the doctor's preparatory sounds for starting. "So ye think it's a good pulse, eh?—Doesn't intermit at all, I hope, does it?"

"Oh no, admiral, capital pulse as you could wish to have."

"Ah, I'm glad of it—glad of it, doctor—you wouldn't advise my proceeding with the carminative, eh, would ye, doctor?"

"Why, that's just as you may feel inclined—I wouldn't have recourse to it unless those dyspeptic symptoms return—at present you've capital health you know, admiral."

"I'm very glad to hear ye say so—very—well, good bye!—Hope I mayn't see your face for a month. *See?* what—old fool!—what am I talking of—with you young fellows round me, I forget I'm blind!—Well, well, one leg in the grave, and both my eyes,—can't hold out much longer!" and with a mournful shake of the head, at strange variance with his pertinacity on the score of age, he slipped his usual two guineas into his attendant's hand, and allowed him to depart.

I was now called upon to tell my story since my last departure, which I did, and after the admiral had shared in all my dangers, exulted in my triumphs, and sympathized with me in the misfortunes of those for whom I wished to interest him,—he heard my final proposal in dead silence; then, after assuming a very severe aspect for some minutes—said, "Corporal Royal."

"Sir?"

"Call a council of war."

Finding that some new operation was to be carried into effect, I sat quite still, imagining, and rightly, that this would be the wisest proceeding. The corporal, having on the receipt of his master's order arisen and departed, soon returned leading

in his better half. My lady-housekeeper, attired in a manner sufficiently gay, paid her respects to me, and then curtseying low, as was her custom to the blind admiral, took up her position behind his chair; on the back of which she leant. Dickson and the corporal stood at ease upon my right, and thus the party fronting the open window in a semicircle, and facing the quarter-deck, formed the "council of war."

"Mrs. Royal," commenced the admiral, and then followed the whole of my story, somewhat abbreviated, it is true, but nevertheless brought up to the very point of my rescuing the fair Spaniards.—"Now, d'ye see, Mrs. Royal," he continued, "d'ye see that Mr. Arran wants to bring them here, till such time as their affairs are somewhat arranged. What d'ye say to it, Mrs. Royal?"

"Why, your honour, I say that if the poor creatures can come here after all their misfortunes," with a sob, "we ought to be happy and glad to have them."

"Ay, ay, glad enough I suppose! Devil a doubt of it!—But if you please, don't begin to cry about the matter, for that, I take it, is unnecessary; seeing, if ye do, I can't do less than cry for company—and my old eyes have had their ports boused in too long, to let the water out easily. D'ye think, ma'am, there's accommodation on board?"

"Lor! bless ye, admiral, what are ye talking of? when there's the whole of the upstairs floor—saving your honour's bed-room—quite unoccupied, three drawing rooms, and I don't know what beside."

"What, ye mean the admiral's cabin?"

"Yes, sir, the same."

"Then why don't ye speak so that I can understand ye?—Well, then, there's stowage for them, is there?"

"Plenty, your honour."

"Humph!—Well, Mr. Charles, and how long do these craft of yours intend to stay?"

"I should think not long, sir!" I replied, rather vexed at having started a subject which seemed so full of objection; "some short time."

"Ay, ay—a 'short time!'—Months, I suppose—ten or twelve months—'a short time!'—Long enough, I dare say, to talk me to death—women talk so!—D'ye think they talk much?—Wait—let me see; why, they're foreigners, d'ye say? What language do they talk?"

“French, sir.”

“French, psha!—Bah!—How are we to get on? Who s to understand them?”

“Why you talk French yourself, admiral, and Dickson knows enough of the language to interpret their orders.”

“One consolation, sha’n’t have much to say to them. Interpreters!—See how ’twill be—the old ship turned into a second Babel!—But I say, Master Charles, I hope they’re not French-women! because if they are, I’ll be—”

“Why, have I not told you, sir, that the father was a Spaniard, and the daughter born in Andalusia?”

“Well, well, that’s something better; and now d’ye think, Mrs. Royal, if I have them here, that ye’ll be able to keep the peace together, because d’ve see, fighting or squabbling is a direct breach of the articles of war, and I won’t have all the women in the fleet drafted on board my ship, to be wrangling and caterwauling like cats on a house-top, subverting all good discipline and everything else. Well, well, if ye think ye can agree, ye may take back my launch—close carriage I suppose ye call it—and tell them that Phil Fluke will be happy to do his best and make them comfortable for the time being. D’ye mark me, only for the time being. None of your long-tailed invitations, now, from new year to Christmas. I’m an old fellow and can’t stand it; but for the time, ye may say—I’ll—I’ll be very happy. Ugh, ugh, ugh,—what liars we are upon occasions! Egad, if I didn’t think such a speech would have choked me! Royal, order my gig, I must take a little air after it. There, start with ye, Master Charles! You dog! you’ve brought me into a pretty pickle; so now see if ye can’t bring your craft back in time for dinner: and bring Burgos with ye, by-the-by, and the first lieutenant, and the surgeon, and—and—and any other fellow who happens to have a good knack of getting his jawing tacks well aboard. There’ll be a famine of talk in the ship before long, I see it clearly.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” and I moved to depart.

“Mrs. Royal.”

“Sir?”

“Shift my cot and traps down here into the ward-room and stow it in what I call my secretary’s cabin.”

“Pooh, sir! pack o’ nonsense.”

“Do it, woman, I say—so no more about that.—Royal, my gig ready?” and starting up with more energy than I had

ever seen him use before, he felt his way to the window with his cane, and getting into his chair drove off.

In due time the fair refugees came. Contrary to my fears, the admiral received them with the greatest kindness, and as Cornelia had, on the voyage, learnt sufficient English to understand the admiral's meaning—which he assisted with all the French remaining in his vocabulary—he soon grew so much attached to his attentive companion, that before I again sailed from Spithead, I believe he would almost as soon have lost a limb as have parted with her.

Owing to circumstances, we were again much sooner at sea than I had expected, or, if I must confess my feelings—than I wished. Having arrived at Spithead, just at the time when Lord Howe was mustering his Channel squadrons, Captain Burgos received orders to put himself under his lordship's command; whereas we had expected to have been sent back to join Lord Hood in the Mediterranean.

We were not, however, much affected either with joy or grief at this; since, if we lost a pleasant station, we had the greater chance of falling in with the French fleet, which I have already mentioned, as encountered by Lord Howe in the Bay of Biscay. It was then, as I have said, commanded by M. Morard-de-Galles. His lordship, in November, had fallen in with another squadron under M. Vanstabel; but in either case his foes had proved too nimble for him, and in December he anchored at Spithead.

As his fleet was expected to sail somewhat earlier than it did, and the Briton would scarcely have been ready, a new ship which had just been put in commission, and was at a standstill for want of hands, was ordered to receive our officers and ship's company, while her former complement was to be turned over into the Briton. By the time that the old craft was refitted, it was hoped that the captain would have succeeded in getting a crew. He had not the best of names as an agreeable officer, and it was whispered that this was the reason of his ship remaining unmanned.

Being then thus turned over into our new vessel, which I shall call the Rutland, we soon had her ready for sea, and on the 2nd of May, forming one of the grand Channel fleet, finally made sail from St. Helen's. * * * *

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CHAPTER XIV.

EVERY one admits the feelings of the moment to be the truest—an old journal lies before me, in which seems to have been kept a sort of isolated diary of the events following at this period, and, till the weather moderates, let these speak for themselves.

“2nd of May, 1794. Sailed from St. Helen’s, under the command of Lord Howe—never so touched by any warlike display before—no, not even the sacking of Toulon. Is it possible I ever may be so again?—well, I know not—how ardently do I long for the lapse of a few brief years—a poor part of the play and subordinate’s faith—were it not for the dear old admiral’s interest, I should be heart-broken with despair! My soul quite bounds within me when thinking of the short space which may see me in possession of at least a frigate of my own. Then, then, then—pause, Charles Arran, in your exultation! remember you are the adopted of misfortune!

“No less than thirty-four sail of the line compose our fleet; together with fifteen or sixteen frigates, and small craft, accompanied by a convoy of one hundred vessels—truly the sight is superb! and forms, I believe, one of the largest fleets which England has ever sent to sea! What may we not do? When one beholds such an armament as this, confided to one man’s command, it is not difficult to account for, and is surely but charitable in some measure to pardon, that feeling of pride, which is so apt to grow upon the hearts of naval officers! This but too soon begets a habit of domination, which I am convinced is not less baneful to the service of the sovereign than it is irritating to the feelings of the junior officers.

“—Splendid passage down the channel. Fleet hove-to off the Lizard—parted with our convoys, and detached Admiral Montagu with eight sail of the line and six frigates, to see them fairly across the Bay of Biscay; after which he is to consign them to the care of Captain Rainier, with two line of battle ships. Dined in the ward-room. Captain Burgos a guest there—discussion turned on the war—its continuance

promising to be of great length—what damage we had effected against France during last year. The affair of Toulon reconsidered—much praise bestowed on Sir Edward Pellew's gallant action ; in which he took the Cleopatre with the Nymphé. Captain Nelson of the Agamemnon much commended in an affair with five of the enemy's frigates—beaten off.

“ ‘Ah,’ said Burgos, ‘more stuff in that little fellow than you think ; that is, when I say stuff—mean nothing of the sort—hasn’t an ounce of flesh in his whole body, but still there’s more—there’s more in him than a stouter man, d’ye comprehend? ’ Captain disappointed by the non-arrival of a cousin, severely wounded at the taking of Tobago, in April of last year.

“ Very interesting discussion respecting the French privateer Dumourier, which, together with her prize, a Spanish galleon from Lima, had been captured by Sir John Gell. Sir John, forming a part of Lord Hood’s Toulon fleet, had preceded us from Spithead, and taken the Dumourier on his way out. Prize supposed altogether to be worth half a million—likely to be condemned—Spanish galleon and all—merchants at Madrid in great wrath—let them fight it out, then !

“ Fleet reduced to twenty-six sail of the line, besides frigates and small craft. . . . Off Ushant—French fleet at anchor in Brest road. Symptoms of coming on to blow a little.—Hope not. Stood away to fall in with the French convoy expected from America ; supposed to be laden with stores, &c., &c.,—all that’s nice ! Said to consist of more than three hundred sail—France quite hard up for it. Do Johnny Crapeau out of it yet. Charitable !

“ 18th.—Here we are, cruising about yet—no convoy—nothing in the berth but salt horse ; rather hard up ourselves, I think. Dined with the captain—stand-up, pocket-knife dinner, as usual ! cold leg of mutton—cold plum-pudding.—Quite a chance !

“ 19th.—Brest roads discovered to be empty—bah ! thus the fox escapes the lion’s paw.—But we’ll have him yet !—H.M.S. Venus joined the fleet in the evening, from Admiral Montagu’s squadron. Nearly dusk when she made her number. Rather, late, ma’am !—‘ Tam Venus otia amat,’ as Ovid says—Caught spouting by the captain standing behind. Translation of the sentence demanded from the surgeon. ‘ Tam ’—thus, ‘ Venus ’—Venus, ‘ amat ’—loves, ‘ otia ’—the ocean.

“‘Devilish good motto!’ said Burgos—‘Mem’ said I—‘skill in the languages of the dead not at all necessary to cure the living!’—whispered the surgeon his mistake—Doctor sherried below.”

First lieutenant asked me if I knew it was my watch? Told him no—found it was—‘Go to the mast-head for not doing your duty,’—so much for jokes!—weather aloft cool and refreshing—much sustained by the captain’s claret—called down in two hours—hint from the captain to the first luff—Burgos a capital fellow! Went on board the admiral with the skipper, in his barge; heard the news—Admiral Montagu’s squadron said to be in danger from the Brest fleet, under M. Villaret. Fleet made all sail just before daylight to get to his relief—steering west, and west by south.

“Morning of the 21st, fell in with a detachment of a Dutch convoy, late French prizes of M. Villaret. Removed men and cargo, and burnt ten or a dozen sail. No convoy from America yet. By accounts of the Dutch prisoners, French fleet close at hand, and eager for an encounter as ourselves—well done, Johnny!

“23rd.—No fleet yet!—no convoy—more Dutchmen. French fleet distant but two days’ sail.

“25th.—Begin to come up with the laggars. Gave chase to the Audacieux, seventy-four, on her way to the French fleet from M. Nielly; chase escaped. H.M.S. Audacious and Niger chasing strangers to leeward. Lee chase—two French small craft, men-of-war, taken and burnt.

“28th.—Huzza! huzza! huzza! three cheers and jump overboard, you dogs!—Forty minutes past six this morning, French fleet discovered, right in the wind’s eye. Signalled by Lord Howe to reconnoitre the enemy—all hands to quarters by beat of drum,—what an electric feeling of excitement that sound produces!—Never before turned out of my hammock without a pang.

“8.50 A.M. Enemy wear and bear down under all sail. Admiral’s signal flying, ‘prepare for action,’—ready for that days ago. Enemy’s fleet count from the mast-head twenty-six sail of the line. Advanced squadron, shorten sail by signal. Frigates to fall back upon our guns.

“10.10 A.M. Enemy nine miles to windward; heave-to on the larboard tack. British fleet wearing, forms in two columns;

our squadron still in advance. Noon, go to dinner by admiral's signal.

" 1.40. Advanced British, telegraphed to attack French rear. Captain sherrying about the quarter-deck in an ecstasy, rubbing his hands. In great hopes of leading the fleet into action—post of honour!—Cracking on all sail. Admiral's signal for general chase—admiral's signal to close and engage. Huzza! huzza!

" 2.4 P.M. Open fire on the French rear while in stays—received theirs—more smoke and noise than aught besides. Push hard for the enemy's wake. Gentry rather shy, undecided yet to fight or fly, but able, from possession of the weather-gage, to do either. Continue to stand on. Tacked. French fleet shortened sail to close its rear with a three-decker, the last soon closely engaged by Admiral Pasley, in the *Bellerophon*. Press forward to take our share.

" 10.40 P.M. After much intense suffering, seem to be awaking from some frightful dream. Find myself in my hammock, my head the size of my body, swathed round by bandages, streaming with cold vinegar and water, and whirling frightfully. Have a recollection of nothing, save being struck down on the quarter-deck by a heavy splinter, much surprised, consequently, to find myself in this world instead of the other. Just able to muster voice enough for the—"how goes the battle?"—firing still going on with the French three-decker—mizen-mast of the last shot away, and the ship otherwise so much disabled, as to be obliged to fall out of her own line. Closely engaged by the *Audacious*. No chance of an action coming on to-night. Firing ceased; French three-decker colours down, allowed to slip through our fingers, by the bungling of the *Thunderer*.

" 29th.—Tried to leave my hammock, and get on deck: unable to stand—head swollen and painful to a degree. Bled by the surgeon. French three-decker no longer in sight—*Audacious* missing from the English line. Day-break, a strange sail joined the enemy.

" 5.10 A.M. Stranger, accompanied by a frigate, made sail and parted company. Never suffered more!—to be tied thus like an ass to its manger, and an action coming on!—Signalled by the admiral to break and weather the enemy's line!

" 5.30 P.M. Day spent in manœuvring and abortive at-

tempts to bring on a general engagement. Enemy's line gallantly cut by Lord Howe in the Queen Charlotte, as well as by Bellerophon and Leviathan. But the severed ships—two of the French rear—saved by the manœuvring of M. Villaret. H.M.S. C—r behaved villainously: want of proper support said to be evident in the British line; French not much better. Both busy repairing damages—obtained the weather-gage at last. Heavy sea on; midnight—blowing fresh with hazy weather—enemy seen on the lee bow, distant twelve miles.

“ 31.—Thick foggy weather shuts the enemy out from view: head much better, able to turn it a little: able to speak—not much. 11.45. French fleet seen in the north—twenty-six sail instead of twenty-five, and every stick perfect! Must have worked like dray-horses in refitting. Nothing decided to-night—nightfall, still in possession of weather-gage.

“ 1st of June!—Daylight. The enemy to leeward, bearing N.N.W., five and a half miles. Every promise of a glorious day. Light breeze from the southward, and a smooth sea on—latitude 47° 48' north, longitude 18° 30' west.—Head still swollen and exceedingly stiff, but so much better that, contrary to the surgeon's advice, I get up and find my way to the quarter-deck. Rather weak, but able to walk with some difficulty. Fleet signalled to bear down upon the enemy; soon, however, came to the wind again, upon the old tack, the larboard. Fleet signalled to break the enemy's line, and passing to leeward, engage at close quarters. Fleet hove-to for breakfast.

“ 8.20 A. M. French fleet on the lee bow, distant three and a half miles. Finally filled. Many ships changing stations to match themselves more equally with the enemy's line—ship for ship, as by signal. British line well formed at an angle with that of the enemy—bore down and engaged.

“ 9.30. Received the enemy's fire—fire returned: French line first broken by the Defence, on our lee quarter.

“ 10.—Observed Lord Howe in the Queen Charlotte cutting the enemy's line astern of the French Admiral. Pushed for our opponent, and unable to pass to leeward, brought up on his weather quarter and engaged with effect. Loss sustained in bearing down severe, owing to the slanting direction in which we were obliged to lie: thus exposed to a raking fire. Conduct of the C—r, as van ship, worse than on the 27th. Observed our old friend Bellerophon ahead, hardly pressed by

her own opponent, and that of the C——r. Remarked, out of the whole British fleet, not one in four have succeeded in complying with admiral's signal of breaking the enemy's line; the greater proportion engaging at short distances to windward.

“Battle raging furiously just ahead and astern. The fire thence slackening towards the centre of our line. Observed the Queen Charlotte in a group almost unsupported, and keeping up a tremendous cannonade. Action not very warm again till near the rear of the two lines. Symptoms of our opponent wincing under our guns, which, being chiefly directed at her hull, had left her rigging not much damaged. Observed her attempting to wear, hung on her quarter, and followed her out of the line.

“Ship's steerage much impeded by the loss of spars. Main and mizen top-gallant masts shot away, fore mast badly wounded, starboard shrouds much cut, and fore-top mast gone; found ourselves unable to keep up with our opponent, who, hugging the wind as closely as possible, rapidly forged clear ahead. Made the best of our way to the assistance of our second ahead. Observed the French admiral astern, collecting around him such of his ships as had not suffered too severely to be under management, and detaching frigates to those who were in want of assistance, while he continued standing on towards the rear or eastern end of his own line, for the protection of several of his ships; many of which now appeared to be wholly dismasted. M. Villaret has accomplished his object, and directs his attack on a British ship, on his weather bow, supposed to be the Queen, who, with her mainmast and mizentop-mast gone, had followed her opponent down to leeward, and was now refitting—her prize lying near her. Hastened to form in line astern of the flag-ship, in obedience to signal, for protection of the Queen. Signs of the French admiral observing this demonstration. Perceived him edging away from his object of attack, and contenting himself with giving her the broadside of his line—too distant for effect. Signalled by the admiral to secure prizes. Made towards the * * * and took possession.

“Heavy firing still continuing among detached ships.—Action decided to all intents and purposes of a naval combat. Numbers of the enemy's ships partly dismasted, and nine entirely so. French admiral making strenuous endeavours to

save such as he possibly can, and very fairly seconded in his endeavours by his captains. Evidences of the inactivity induced by a long peace very visible in our fleet—many of our ships, though scarcely engaged, or touched in the action, now lying idle, instead of securing the disabled enemy, attempting to escape. Only two of our ships wholly dismasted, and six partially so. All hands busily employed in clearing decks, and temporarily repairing damages; find ourselves gradually settling to leeward of the two lines. Now lines no more!—but here a ship knotting her rigging, and there a captor staying by his prize—another taking possession—a fourth getting his prisoners aboard. Friend and foe indiscriminately dotted over the scarcely ruffled sea. Day clear and beautiful as possible to conceive—strange contrast of the two noble fleets, which this morning made so gallant a show, scarcely one vessel to be seen without bearing some traces of the deadly and obstinate struggle. Paint blackened and begrimed, anchors torn away, rigging cut to pieces, spars shattered, ports blown off, sails in tatters—hull dented with shot in all directions. These are the outward proofs—within, gore and carnage undistinguished. Many a brave fellow, who but this morning drew the breath of Heaven in joy and confidence, now lies low indeed!—madened and raving with a mortal anguish—his lips parched beyond the soothing of the sweetest draught, and praying for the happy moment to expire.

“Little deem our friends on shore, at what a costly price the glory of each naval victory is bought!

“5.30. P.M. Observed a French line of battle ship to leeward totally dismasted, and apparently sinking—made for her. 6.20. Boats ordered away to assist others of the fleet in rescuing her crew. My boat one of the few now left in a floating condition. Ship in distress, proved to be the *Vengeur*—struck to H.M.S. *Brunswick*, Captain Harvey, after a most determined and deadly encounter. Poor Harvey said to be killed! *Vengeur* the merest wreck that ever floated on the waves.—Cut, hacked, and battered beyond description. Her decks literally ripped up and harrowed by the fire from her opponent’s lower tier—her bottom the same, as seen every time see rolls her copper out of water. What a mercy that she should have remained swimming!—great part of her crew infuriated with the double excitement of slaughter and of drinking—some obstinately refusing to be saved—many seated

on the poop shouting *vive la république!* singing national songs and waving the tricolour, a fair sample of French heroism. The dead and dying, heaping her shattered decks in all directions. Succeeded in carrying on board the third boat load—just started for another. Vengeur seen to settle slightly by the head. An awful shriek rose on the nearly still air of a fine June evening. The vanquished line of battle ship slightly wavered for a moment, came gently over on her side, and then plunging her bows into the blue waves, for ever sank from the surface of that ocean on which she had so lately floated in all her glory and her pride.

“Gallant Vengeur! ‘Twas fortune conquered thee, and not the foe! Her commander, Captain Renaudin, said to be saved. Fleet and prizes to windward much shattered, French admiral long since made off; number of prizes, as near as can be reckoned, not less than six. Come, let me mark upon my map, the little spot, to which fame will delight to point, through so many future ages!

“The battle of the first of June, 1794—fought in latitude 46 north, longitude 18 west, as near as can possibly be ascertained. This spot is in a straight line with Cape Clear, in dear old Ireland, and seven degrees due west. The wind was from the southward, with a little westing in it; so if you place for the French ships, twenty-six dots in a line from east to west, and opposite to these, bearing down to leeward, in a diagonal line from south-east to north-west, twenty-five more dots for the English ships, you have at once the opening of this decisive conflict. For the finale and result, you may put down at the bottom of the page, six of the enemy’s line taken and one sunk. France chastised, and England’s maritime supremacy gloriously maintained!”

CHAPTER XV.

FOR more than two weeks after the time of my journal thus abruptly concluding, I had no consciousness of anything passing around me. I perfectly remember, however, being tormented by sundry strange and incomprehensible dreams, all tending to persuade me, that I was anywhere in the world but

on board a ship. Nor in this was I deceived. Very sufficient proof was speedily afforded, of my being in no other spot, than my old chamber at the "Folly."

That I was in bed I was sure, from feeling the pile of pillows on which I had been propped;—yet, that it was no hour for sleep, seemed evident, both from the baffled sunbeams playing on the window-curtain, and the hand of the timepiece which pointed to four o'clock. A sudden and agonizing pang, however, shooting through my brain, and taking up its final position in my right ear, seemed to explain the whole affair:—peeping through my curtains to see if I was watched, my eye rested on a female figure,—the figure itself rested on a sofa near the window.

It was the mother of Cornelia: she held a book in her hand over which she was intently poring—no, securely slumbering.

"I should have been much better pleased if it had been the daughter," said I to myself,—I know not how it is,—daughters of sixteen do sometimes possess a charm which mothers of six-and-thirty have possessed.

In another instant, Cornelia herself entered. Stealing through the room so lightly, that I heard no footstep, she awoke her parent with a kiss; presenting her at the same time with a letter. Over the fate of this epistle, they now held some slight colloquy, in which I could not help fancying that I was interested. This, at least, I inferred from the sundry glances directed towards my couch; as well as from a few broken sentences indistinctly heard.

I was about to announce my return to consciousness by speech, when the tiny finger of madame—for so I cannot help calling Donna L * *, who so constantly stickled for the honour of being a Frenchwoman—her finger then breaking the seal, set her at liberty to read the letter it had been intended to secure. This she soon accomplished, and handing it over to her daughter, together with an enclosure which it contained, said, in a tone half ejaculatory, half communicative,—“*Il est mort seulement!*”—adding, with a listless languor, as she fanned herself with her handkerchief, “*Il fait très étouffant aujourd’hui, ma mignonne; n'est-ce pas?*” The colour faded from Cornelia’s cheek, as she silently received the letter thus delivered to her.

Taking a chair at the head of the sofa towards which madame’s back was turned, she proceeded to peruse the fatal dis-

patch. Seated so near me, that by stretching out my arm, I could have taken the letter from her hand, she knew not that I was watching her—that I was beholding, as it were, reflected in her beloved features, the contents of the sheet they withheld from my view. Placing beside her the black sealed envelope, whose brief communication she had soon perused, she unfolded the enclosure which her mother had not, it would seem, considered worthy of attention. As she drew near its close, the tell-tale paper betrayed the falling of those tears which had stolen from her eyes unseen. I felt strangely tempted to weep too—nay, I will not affirm—

“*Il est mort!*”—who could the emancipated sufferer be, whose memory these precious drops were thus embalming?—To be wept by Cornelia, how willingly could I have died myself! For some time she remained motionless, while the letter lay clasped in her hands before her. Her gaze abstractedly fixed, seemed to meet mine, though she saw me not—nor, indeed, could I very clearly behold her; a similar cause obscured the vision of either.

Little did I think how much greater cause I had to mourn. The blow which had called forth her sympathy for a stranger, doomed mine to bleed for the loss of one loved dearer than a brother.

“Poor Charles!” I heard her say, as she arose and gently moved aside my curtain. What would I not have given to have seen that tearful eye bent on me!—To have marked in her countenance the compassion that reigned in her heart!—I dared not look. Ashamed to publish the weakness into which her example had betrayed me, I had no resource but in counterfeiting a repose which I never was further from enjoying!

What a tumult of emotions reigned in my bosom!—*Idolo mio!*—Did not the loud throbbing of my heart—the “*palpitazione cara e deliciosa*” disclose the falsehood of my eyes? What divine—what tender impulse excited an interest for one so unworthy of you—when leaning over me to ‘note my slumber, your soft tear fell upon my cheek, and softer fingers unheeding touched the lips, that dared to kiss them?

That moment was decisive of our fate! I never might have pleaded the diviner weaknesses of humanity for my errors, if the shock of such an electric chain had not induced me to detain the wanderers there!

It was enough then. The looks that followed, told us how

much we loved ! Trembling and agitated, Cornelia sank back upon her chair, beside me, but the handkerchief which concealed her mantling features, could not wholly suppress the sounds of her grief—gentle as it was, it disturbed the siesta of madame.

“ It is the horrid letter ! ” said the latter, rising and attempting to take the sheet from Cornelia.

“ The letter from whom ? ” I faintly demanded.

“ From— from Mr. Miles—he is dangerously ill.”

“ He is dead—only,” said I, quoting her own words, with an involuntary tone of bitterness and reproach, and sinking on my pillow, swooned.

The agitation of this sudden misfortune brought on a relapse of the brain fever, under which I had been labouring. When almost sufficiently restored to read the announcement of my young friend’s death, the following papers were put into my hand:—

“ Corsica, H.M.S. ——.

“ SIR,—The enclosed letter is addressed to you by Mr. Miles, and most sincerely do I lament that the task of forwarding it should have devolved upon any but your estimable and promising young friend. As his captain, however, the routine of the service imposes this duty on myself. Judging from the evidence before me, I cannot but suppose that you shared with him a friendship which it must, indeed, be distressing to survive. That such, however, is your lot, is all that remains for me to say.

“ Mr. Miles was wounded by a canister shot, early yesterday morning, while on duty ashore. He was insensible when brought on board, and subsequently survived but a few minutes. The enclosure was found by me, directed but unsealed, among his papers ; it may, perhaps, be gratifying to you, as a friend, to know that during the short time Mr. Miles was under my command, I had every reason to be highly gratified both with his conduct and disposition as an officer and a gentleman.

“ I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

“ * * * * .”

The letter enclosed ran as follows:—

“ H.M.S. ——, Corsica.

“ DEAR ARRAN,—In fulfilment of my promise, I seize a spare half-hour to commence our projected correspondence. Your first question will be,—How do I like my new ship ?—

Indifferently well, then. There are many on board to whom I think I shall soon grow partial, and if there happen to be a few also of the other class, why, truly, it is no more than I had a right to expect.

“ I miss you sadly, and have hitherto, I assure you, been quite unable to fix on one whom I can elect into the high office and unlimited confidence of crony ; with all its various privileges and immunities.

“ In the captain and first lieutenant, however, I have not been less fortunate than I was led to expect ; and this gives me nothing to regret on the subject of leaving the Briton.

“ Soon after your departure for England, our fleet anchored in the bay of Hières, which, as you remember, is to the eastward of Toulon. Lord Hood having, however, determined to blockade the French forces in Corsica, despatched us, together with a few other ships, under the command of Captain Nelson.

“ This duty, which consisted chiefly in annoying Johnny Crapeau, by seizing his stores and provisions, and turning them to our benefit, was, as you may imagine, amusing enough. A sad accident, however, which occurred to one of the squadron rather discomposed us.

“ In the middle of January, we took as passengers to Corsica, Sir Gilbert Elliott, Lieut.-Colonel John Moore, and a Major Koehler. Sir Gilbert, it was known, had come out from England to be viceroy ; the two latter officers were to inspect the island previous to our descent, which they were, I believe, to arrange with General Paoli. The fleet speedily afterwards sailed with Lord Hood from Hières, accompanied by the usual train of transports—making, I think, altogether fifty-seven sail—they did not, however, continue long together, for the next day it came on to blow so hard, that they lost sight of their convoy, and the greater part of the fleet separated —there being scarcely a ship amongst them that did not suffer. Having, however, after some buffeting, gained the harbour of Porto Ferrajo, in the island of Elba, a separate squadron was put under the command of Captain L——ce, of the Alc——de, and with sundry transports, despatched to Mortella Bay, with orders to take us under his command. We did not, however, anchor in the bay, it being in the possession of the enemy, but brought up not far to the westward of it.

“ Having taken in succession the tower of Mortella, as well

as the fortifications of Fornelli and San Forenzo, we at length succeeded in getting possession of the town, and came to in Mortella Bay ; having compelled the enemy to shut themselves up in Bastia, a place of some strength, as you know, being on the N.E. of the island. Taking this town, therefore, was the next amusement for us, and Lord Hood lost no time in preparing for it.

“ General D—d—s, however, whom you may remember to inherit the slow-coach propensities of his family, refused all aid or assistance ; saying, and you will perceive very wisely too, that even if he joined us with his thirteen hundred troops, we should still be much too weak to attack Bastia, and, therefore, the good of the country demanded that he should remain neuter : doubtless meaning thereby, to look on and see fair play.

“ He was accordingly nearly as good as his word, and maintained his men in this most honourable employment of British troops, during a space of forty days, when, as the French general, St. Michel, was signing the capitulation that placed the town in our hands, he appeared on the neighbouring heights, to see, I suppose, that no improper irregularities were committed by honest Jack Tar, in the fulness of his joy at taking the town unaided.

“ The success of our measures here, we certainly owe to the little brigadier, as we call Captain Nelson—a perfect ‘ Jack of all trades ’—hopping about like a parched pea in a frying-pan, here, there, and everywhere at once. You may swear, Arran, that I am now almost as good a soldier as yourself, having completed at this siege, the lessons begun at Toulon.

“ Bastia being taken, Paoli now redeemed his promises, by getting the inhabitants of the island to shake off the French yoke, and accept in general assembly the protection proffered by England, through the medium of Sir Gilbert Elliott.

“ Bastia, now that we have had as fair an opportunity of examining it from within, as we before had from without, is, in truth, a place of no slight strength ; and permit me to say, very great credit is due to the navy for this affair. You will scarcely believe that the besieged on surrendering, amounted to nearly four times the number of the besiegers. Be pleased, however, to understand that our gallantry was greatly assisted by hunger and starvation on the part of the besieged ; two very powerful and peccant allies.

“ In the meanwhile, General Stuart having joined us from Gibraltar with the two thousand troops for the arrival of which General D—d—s had delayed his assistance, we now agreed, army and navy, to co-operate in the reduction of Calvi, a seaport town situated to the south-west of Bastia.

It was on the 20th of June that we first broke ground before this town: Captain and Brigadier Nelson still commanding the naval force, and General Stuart that of the army; and soon after noon, Lord Hood himself, who had been absent on a cruise, came to in Mortella Bay. He sent us, forthwith, as many hands as he could spare, together with some officers, and among the rest, your old friend S—r—c—d. As you may suppose, we had pretty much the same duties to perform here as at Bastia; dragging the cannon up the heights and planting the various batteries.

“ In this last employment it was, as you may have seen by the Gazette, that poor S—r—c—d was killed.—Poor fellow! after gaining his promotion so gallantly at Toulon, and maintaining it so nobly at Bastia, where his frigate, the *Prosélyte*, was burnt by the enemy’s hot shot.

“ Much to my annoyance, I was confined to the ship during the early part of the siege. A poor private having been shot beside me while working at the batteries, a splinter from his bayonet was forced through the calf of my leg. Luckily no bones were broken, and though lamed severely at the time, I have at length managed to return to duty.

“ Captain Nelson too, a day or two ago, received what is likely to turn out a severe injury in the eye, from some sand having been driven into it. At present the sight is lost, but this we hope will not continue, for it is impossible to find an officer either more active in his duties, or more esteemed and beloved by his men. We both of us, I think, know the rarity of this union in our service.

“ Our chief torment is the weather—it is killing us rapidly! Here we are at the end of July,—the siege has already lasted thirty-eight days, and when the commander of the beleaguered garrison, old Casa-Bianca, intends to give in, I really don’t know. Pray for us, my dear Arran, that it may be soon.

“ The cruise on which, as I mentioned, Lord Hood had been absent, was productive of no result.

“ This, then, my dear Arran, forms pretty well the whole of my budget up to this present writing, with the exception of

one thing, which, knowing that it will interest you, I have reserved till the last.

“ Colonel John Moore desired me to give you his kindest regards at the earliest moment, and say that whenever you might return to the Mediterranean, and happen to be serving near him, he would ‘take it as a personal favour if you would find him out, and allow him to consider himself one of your friends.’ It seems that, when a boy at Geneva, he had heard much kind mention made by the lord mareschal, both of your father and grandfather, whence his message to you, which you must acknowledge was a very pretty one; coming from him, too, it was a good deal to say, for his general deportment is reserved and distant, though not more than would be dictated by the judgment of any man who knew the world. He seems, however, much attached to every recollection of his boyhood, and this convinced me that he must be a good fellow. We were friends on the instant; if I know anything of your taste, he is just the very man you admire. Nice fine feelings of honour for the service, the gentleman conspicuous in every point of his character, and a noble countenance. You must know him, he is just one of those men whom you and I so long determined to be the *raræ ares* of this sad world.

“ My paper, you see, forbids my saying any more. Crossed and recrossed in every direction, it will not be well of you, unless you speedily return me an answer, and tell me when and where you but caught a sight of our phantom glory. Let them laugh at our enthusiasm as they will, no one shall persuade me that this is not our legitimate object after all. No man was ever really great, either in intellect or station, whose mind was not in private fixed upon exalted objects; and the mere capability of such a contemplation, shows a soul above the mass. For you, I need say nothing to one whose motto by inheritance is ‘Forward,’ and I only hope and pray that you may speedily return to share with us all the fine things going. Only answer this in person, and ten thousand times more welcome will it be than if by letter.

“ In conclusion, my dear Arran, I wish you every possible enjoyment, and as I cannot do you the injustice to doubt that you fully reciprocate my regard, you will not be sorry to know that my wound is perfectly healed, leaving me as strong as a young lion, and I hope as brave. I remain, your devoted friend,

“ GRAHAM'S MILES.”

CHAPTER XVI.

“As strong as a young lion, and I hope as brave!”

Struck down in the pride of health, youth, and manly beauty, at the very moment when the first dazzling views of human greatness were dawning on a soul, already rich in the truer grandeur of sterling excellence and worth. Without a moment’s warning! Full of hope, as the morning rose-bud is of dew—poor Miles, then, had descended to the tomb!

Never again, much as I wished it, could I feel for a friend as I felt for Miles. We had bled side by side—we had campaigned together; I had watched over his slumbers; he had afforded security to mine; we had shared with one another adventures of every kind—the secrets of my bosom were as well known to him as his own,—the confidence he returned to me was not less ample than that I gave. We had drunk from the same cup—we had shared the same morsel—and I was left to remember him whom I could not recall.

Folding up the letter—moistened by other tears than those of Cornelia—I placed it beneath my pillow. Alas, its contents were transcribed upon my heart. There they defied me to efface them.

Much as I strove against it, the melancholy brought on by this occurrence, induced a severe fit of hypochondriacism which greatly retarded my recovery. I scarcely cared to know why it was that I was thus laid upon a bed of sickness and watched with the tenderest care. I was told that my present slow recovery was from the second attack of brain fever, brought on by the splinter wound received in Lord Howe’s action, and almost hourly did the tender solicitude of those around me prompt them to inquire if the improvement in my feelings kept pace with their wishes, or my wants with their benevolence. But for the hands that tended—the lips that spoke—the eyes that watched around me—I could have wished myself enjoying that last calm cold sleep, that seemed successively to fall on all I held most dear!

After much intense suffering, several pieces of bone worked their way from my right ear, and though the sense of distin-

guishing sound was on that side of my head much impaired, the surgeon still held out a hope that this would gradually disappear.

I now began to mend rapidly, and being in a state that admitted visitors among the earliest, were presented two old friends, Joe Royal and Will Watch; Captain Burgos also came frequently to see me; and from them I learnt that part of my existence, which seemed to have been passed in *vacuo*. Having suddenly fainted away on deck, during the evening of the now celebrated 1st of June, I was again entered on the sick-list, as one whose fate was doubtful. Of the passage home to Spithead, with the fleet under Lord Howe, immediately after his great victory, I knew nothing. Neither was I more conscious of the manner in which I had been conveyed out to Fluke's Folly. In the meantime my napping had not prevented the occurrence of many important events, which I, like one from the grave, woke up to hear.

For once an English naval victory met with the honours and rewards it merited. As the commander-in-chief was already an earl, I suppose it was considered unnecessary to promote him in the ranks of the peerage. This, I think, was far from liberal, as his first elevation had not arisen from the country's gratitude, but his own inheritance of the title of viscount from his brother.

Their Majesties had, however, graciously honoured the septagenarian hero with a visit on board his flag-ship, the gallantly-fought Queen Charlotte. Here they presented to the earl a sword set with diamonds, and a gold chain of honour, the whole valued at some three thousand five hundred pounds.

The two seconds in command were ennobled. Sir Alexander Hood—the brother of my old commander Lord Hood—being created Viscount Bridport, and Vice-Admiral Graves getting an Irish peerage of the same name. The four subordinate admirals were rewarded with baronetcies, the captains received medals, the lieutenants obtained promotion, and the midshipmen—oh!—hem!—ha!—yes—they had the *honour* of the affair!

Such of the ships as had not behaved with the gallantry that should distinguish English men-of-war, were of course omitted in the list of rewards; and one Captain M—ll v of the C-s-r, our van ship, was deservedly brought to a court-martial and dismissed his command.

Having been allowed ample time to refit our ships and recruit ourselves, I once more returned on board, when Lord Howe sailed from Spithead, to collect this Channel fleet in Torbay; from which, in the beginning of September, we again weighed, and made sail for the French coast. Our numbers were, at this date, as large as when we had sailed from St. Helen's on the preceding May; amounting, as then, to no less than thirty-four sail of the line. Five of these were, however, Portuguese.

My time was now too much occupied to allow of my noting much of what was going on around me, any further than by resuming the brief journal interrupted since the 1st of June.

“September 1794.—Fleet off Ushant—signalled by the admiral to reconnoitre Brest roads—made sail—shift of wind to the northward, reconnoitring squadron recalled.—Fleet altered course—made sail, and stood away from Ushant.

—“Sudden fall of the glass—change of weather. Thick haze; coming on to blow—blows hard. Four sail of English line with distress-signal flying. Fleet signalled to wear—bravo, old boy!—Portuguese commodore minus a foremast and bowsprit—Portuguese commodore supported—Orion signalled to keep company. Fleet lying-to all night—daylight—weather not improved—fleet bear up and make for Torbay—midnight—two anchors ahead—Torbay—ship snug, and self sleepy.

—“Six weeks’ spell in the bay—time spent in a manner sufficiently idle; parties on shore at Torquay—know many pleasant families—getting somewhat *ennuyée* of pleasure—query, is it pleasure?—wishes divided between the enemy’s appearance at sea, and pretty faces on shore.

“November.—At sea once more—news of the enemy—a squadron of five sail of the line, and three frigates, said to have escaped from Brest, under M. Nielly, in hopes of catching our Lisbon convoy. Too bad of you, if you succeed, Master Johnny Crapeau!

“Time dull on hand. Letters from the admiral kind as ever. Cornelia and her mother still at the ‘Folly.’ The affairs of the latter arranged at last by a friend of the admiral’s—clerk in one of the government offices, formerly a *protégé* of the good old officer. The Frenchman’s bills, for a wonder, paid. The fellow can’t be ‘a good *sans-culotte*.’

“Cornelia! how do your hours fly by?—are you happy?—on whom do your truant thoughts delight to dwell?—or are

they, like the French, afraid to put to sea! Are you beautiful as ever?

“ Life! life! thou art a bore without a parallel! The only one, by-the-by, which we all feel some slight reluctance to terminate.

“ No enemy to be found at sea! Stealth is their order of the day—cruising at intervals off Scilly, and in the mouth of the Channel.

“ December.—Spithead once more!

“ New year’s day!—A long adieu to seventeen hundred and ninety-four! ’Tis an eventful twelvemonth passed away—one to us of great success. Taken from the French, during this year, seven sail of the line, and fourteen frigates: the latter, however, being chiefly captured by squadrons, no very brilliant frigate-action is to be found amongst them. *Concorde* and *Engageante*—pretty fair, for Sir Richard Strachan in the former. *Castor* and *Carysfort* better,—Captain Laforey recapturing in the latter, a ship of superior force—Troubridge’s late frigate. Our colonial operations this year not bad. The capture of Martinique by two officers already highly distinguished—Sir John Jervis and Sir Charles Grey—from General Rochambeau, amply redeemed our want of success there last year. Saint Lucie, too, has also fallen to our arms, and is now, I see, under the government of the Colonel Moore so highly spoken of by poor Miles.

“ As to Sir John’s capture of Guadaloupe, we need say little, since in six weeks it has been re-taken by the French, under Victor Hugues. Somewhat better success at St. Domingo, however, under Commodore Ford. Port-au-Prince, the French capital in that island, added to our other possessions of Cape Nicholas-Mole and Jeremie, obtained last year.

“ Republicans, on the other hand, have mastered and pillaged Sierra Leone, under M. Allemande, and taken during the year one seventy-four, the *Alexander*, Captain Bligh, off Sicily, one frigate, and six sloops. But come, though we have lost, it has been with honour, since every one of these ships, without an exception, have been captured in detail,—each by a force that rendered resistance vain. Casualty list, as usual, rather large, five wrecks, and a couple of two-deckers burnt.

“ French navy said to be still very strong. Supposed to number not less than fifty sail of the line, this side of Gibraltar alone;—leaving out our ci-devant friends in Toulon.

“ A fleet of not less than thirty-five sail, some say thirty-

seven, put to sea, it appears, from Brest on Christmas-day, or the day before, and after losing a three-decker in sight of the port, obliged to return and wait for a week.

“ Port first discovered to be empty by my gallant friend, Sir Sidney S—th. ‘ Fortune favours the brave,’ should be his motto. Who but himself would have dared to work up into Brest road—hoist French national colours in answer to signals from the shore, and trusting himself within fire of a corvette, a frigate, and two ships of the line, have run under the stern of one of the latter—a dismasted vessel,—there offering her *his assistance!*—and learning in answer to his questions that she was the *Nestor*, lately separated from Villaret’s fleet, in a heavy gale of wind, which had occasioned her loss of spars. Bravo! Sir Sidney. But the joke of offering *his assistance!* Gad, it is too laughable! By my word, he well deserved to come off scot-free as he did!

—“ Torbay once more—weather thick, rainy, and very severe—parted our cable twice during our short stay here, but managed to bring up again both times—other ships of the fleet amusing themselves in the same way—get to sea at last, no less than six-and-thirty sail of the line. Now for glory! Talking of that, had the honour of dining at Lord Howe’s table with Captain Burgos during our stay in the bay—second time of receiving this highly flattering, &c., &c.—only midshipman present. Stern, venerable old fellow—not very handsome, by-the-by. Just had three words from him in the course of the evening—asked how my wound was—said something of my uncle serving with him six-and-thirty years before, at the taking of Cherbourg: my unfortunate deaf ear being nearest to him, didn’t catch this remark rightly, and of course did not presume to make him repeat it. Seemed kindly disposed towards me, and desired me to say to Admiral Fluke when I wrote, that business and indisposition had prevented his calling at the ‘Folly’ before he sailed, but he hoped, nevertheless, that both their lives would be spared long enough to permit his seeing an old friend once more.

“ Amen, indeed! say I—for happen what may to either of you, I cannot fail to be the loser. His lordship, I fear, not long destined to enjoy the distinctions he has earned—looking miserably ill—more fit for a sick couch than a winter’s sea. But his spirit will not give in.

“ Off Plymouth, joined by Admiral Parker, with six sail of the line—five of them our old Portuguese friends now under

an admiral's flag. East and West India and Lisbon convoys in company—accompanied them safe out of Channel and detached the squadrons necessary for their safe conduct. Cruising between Scilly and Ushant, obtained intelligence of the French fleet—dispersed by the late gales and driven back, chiefly into Brest, others into L'Orient and St. Malo. Spithead—fleet at anchor.

“ May.—Met Admiral Cornwallis at dinner at the ‘ Folly’—messmate of Admiral Fluke—offered to take me with him in the Royal Sovereign, to sail in a day or two with the squadron, amounting to five sail of the line and two frigates—Captain Burgos at table, and so declined—with all the modesty a midshipman might possess: Mem. not desirous of retaining this distinguished rank much longer. May the 30th.—Cornwallis sailed to cruise in the chops of the Channel—old boy, rather too stiff and methodical for me, said, however, to be an excellent officer; allows no one in his ship to swear, except himself. The health of poor Lord Howe said to be declining fast—rumours of his retiring from command. Lord Bridport to succeed—sorry for it.

“ June the 12th.—Sail from Spithead. Lord Bridport commander-in-chief of the Channel fleet, now amounting to no more than fourteen sail of the line—accompanied by Sir John Borlase Warren in command of an expedition to the bay of Quiberon, northward of Belle-Isle, in the province of Bretagne, said to be a project of Mr. Wyndham.

“ 19th.—Having convoyed Sir John close to his destination, parted with him in supposed safety and possession of a splendid breeze—stood off the land—received intelligence during the night from Sir John Warren of the French Brest fleet being close at hand, while we fondly imagined them snug in port—said to consist of sixteen sail of line, besides frigates. Sir John ordered to send back his three liners to bring us on an equality. Odd's fish! what has happened to our navy, my lord, that fourteen English are not a match for sixteen French?

“ 20th.—Sir John Warren himself in sight to leeward.

“ 22nd.—Get sight of the French fleet, less by four sail of the line than reported. Day spent in endeavouring to come up with the enemy. Tormented by light winds, dwindling towards midnight to a calm. French fleet distant about eight miles. If a man's nose, now, were only eight miles long, confound it, how easy it would be to board them! Mem. those who want glory must seek it by some other path than the bridge of my

nose. Fame has before now been won upon a *tête du pont*, but never hitherto upon such a *pont de tête*—yet why not? the brazen beaks of the Grecian galleys were, we all know, more serviceable than rare, and why not the human proboscis? Admiral G—— now would be a fine subject for the experiment.

“ 23d.—Faugh!—Bah!—Psha! and every other exclamation in the language. Oh, my Lord Bridport! Oh, my Lord Bridport! Pity 'tis, that when people take to the manufacture of admirals, they cannot strike off at the same time the torpor of the last ten years of their lives—as a smith would sever the encumbering fetters of a freed man.

“ Daylight this morning found us in possession of a nice breeze from the southward and westward. The body of the enemy certainly within six miles' distance, some of them much less, and one ship not two and a half miles off from our van. This last consisted of six sail of the line, ourselves among the number, rather straggling, it is true, and headed by the gallant old Queen Charlotte, seconded by the Irresistible.

“ At six, A.M., the French rear opened fire upon our van, which proceeded to engage the enemy as fast as it could come up. At a quarter to seven, the enemy's second rearmost ship—the Formidable—having sustained the heavy fire of the Queen Charlotte and Sans Pareil, discontinued the action with the loss of her mizen mast, and hauled down her colours. At twenty minutes past seven, her example followed by the Alexandre (the very ship which Captain Bligh had lost off Sicily the year before), and soon afterwards by the Tigre.

This was a nice commencement of the action. As yet none of us, save the Queen Charlotte, had received any damage worth mentioning, and our van was in full chase—the Sans Pareil to leeward—the Colossus to windward. The enemy were inferior in numbers, shut out from any port nearer than L'Orient, to windward of them, with the disadvantage of a lee shore and the weather-gage in our possession. What a splendid opportunity—for what?—obeying the admiral's order. At a quarter past eight the leading ships of the British fleet were signalled to forbear further chase or action—the admiral's flag-ship, the Royal George, wore and stood out to sea, followed by the fleet; while M. Villaret, hugging himself at his escape, worked up to windward in shore, getting between an island and the main land, and finally entering L'Orient between eight and nine in the evening.

“ We learn from our prisoners, that Admiral Cornwallis and his little squadron fell in with M. Villaret five days before ourselves—on the 17th—and managed to escape out of the jaws of the enemy, notwithstanding that their number was more than double his own.—Manœuvring and doubling on his rear, for their protection, as a bear does with her cubs—well done, Cornwallis!—you’ve the true pluck of a British seaman; though you won’t allow any one to swear on board but yourself.

“ Hear that our friends of the Quiberon expedition have succeeded in making good their landing on the 27th, and successfully beat back the few republicans opposed to them—strong hopes entertained.—Once more wish them joy of it.—Fleet vastly busy doing nothing, varied with occasional cruising after nobody.

“ Quiberon completely sold!—*Treachery* actually has delivered them into the hands of the republicans.—So much for emigrants!—the only good hands have, it seems, been slaughtered, and stores, sufficient for some fifteen thousand troops, presented gratis to the foe!

“ Well, Sir John—you’re immortalized, at any rate!—A gallant officer too, in your way, but sacrificed to a plan never very promising, and based on means neither adequate in extent, nor trustworthy in materials.—An invasion of France by a body of from two to five thousand men!—these, emigrants, too!—Placing kings upon thrones, I should say, is uphill work!

“ Received letters and despatches from England by H.M. sloop R—, several from the Folly. Cornelia well—the admiral continues to be not less delighted with her, than I had expected.—Letter from the admiral himself, written by his surgeon, laconic as usual, and kind as ever—thanks me most heartily for the few cases of French wines I was able to send him the other day, through Captain Burgos. Nothing seems capable of affording him greater pleasure than the thought that he has still some friends afloat, who think of him with kindness.

“ After a great deal of circumlocutory matter, he proceeds to say, ‘ You will see, boy, ~~that~~ I am obliged to trouble my friend the doctor to send ye this—for as bad a secretary as that good-for-nothing old corporal was, I find his successor is not better, and not being yet quite used to him, there are some

matters in which I am loth to trust everything to the management of a third party, as formerly. I hope, boy, ye follow my advice strictly, and break the head of that old horse pretty duly—once or twice a week—just to let him know that he has a pimple of some sort on his shoulders. A pretty grateful rascal he is, to have started off and left his old master, too blind to budge a step, without fear of falling overboard. Ye couldn't give him a sickener, could ye, boy, of this cursed rambling vein of his?—But mind, Charles, on no account to let out to him that I said so—I won't have his conceit swelled out by thinking I can't do without him—he was bad enough on that score when he went away, but if I ever got him back on those terms, the dog would be unbearable. However, my young master, I suppose you think even *my* word sufficiently worth attention, to continue your journal in the way I pointed out to you—I hope when you're off duty, that you don't go idling about the decks with your hands in your breeches pockets, as you see mest younkers of your age do—nor pass your time in skylarking in the berth, and annoying your oldsters, nor let yourself be found caulking about the orlop decks with your head under your wing at noon day, like a chick on one leg, but continue to read and study a proper portion of your leisure hours in the captain's cabin as usual—and don't swallow what you read as a schoolboy would plum-pudding—look to the style, youngster—see how it's put together.—Egad, sir, if I don't see you pay attention to these matters, you know it will be quite impossible I should ever trust you with *my* memoirs.' Smiling at the warmth of the good old veteran, I put into my pocket the letter, so characteristic of him in every line; determining to use my utmost endeavours to bring about what I saw he wanted. I previously, however, made for the cabin, to deliver a message for him to Captain Burgos, when who should I meet, standing at the head of the hatchway, but Corporal Royal.

—“The corporal's face, I saw at a glance, contained a great deal of importance, and his hand moreover contained a letter—‘What corporal, and have you, too, been receiving your despatches?’

“‘Why, something in that way, Master Charles, and I can't say, Master Charles,’ rubbing his head, ‘that they're altogether so pleasant as they might be.—Lor', Lor'! bless my heart alive, sir! what a deal o' trouble that little freehold down there

in Dock does give me! Why now, here, sir, here's a letter from Sir John St. Mowbray's solicitors. To be sure, 'tis only to ask my leave about building some premises or another close to my little estate—and they want to persuade me that it would be twenty times more for my advantage if I would sell it to Sir John—a pretty go that would be, your honour!—when I want to detail it down to my young ones, just as I got it;—but 'tis plaguy troublesome to be so far away from your property!—How can I tell, Master Charles, what cantrips they may be playing off with it? or what catamaran they may run up alongside of it?—and then, sir, speaking in an under voice, 'then there's the skipper, too, he's been getting confounded whimmy of late—there's no pleasing him, sometimes, at any price—and the first lieutenant comes bullying about one's ears. Them sort o' cattle you know, Master Charles, are all very well in their way, when you're used to 'em, but I can't say I am, for though the good old admiral—God bless him!—used to snap and snarl, I never minded that—I knew he would never come to biting in rale 'arnest; 'tisn't so here. I do wish, Master Charles, you'd make haste and get a ship o' your own. Have ye heard from the old admiral to-day, sir?'

“‘ Yes, Joe.’

“‘ I hope he's hearty as usual.’

“‘ Quite.’

“‘ Well, I'm glad to hear it—I should think, your honour,’—suddenly shifting the question, ‘that Dickon must make but a poor hand at writing all his excellency's letters.’ This last was a sentence half ejaculatory, half interrogatory, but, determined not to help out the corporal in his advances to the point, which I knew him to be approaching, I said nothing in reply.

“‘ Didn't ye think, sir, when ye saw him last, that the poor old gentleman was looking rather weakly:—still I was silent:—‘ I fear, somehow, your honour, that they don't tend to him properly—not that they wouldn't do so if they could, Master Charles—but I don't think they're quite so used to all his ways as—as—as they might be, d'ye see, sir?’—‘ Confess it, now, Master Joe,’ said I, ~~you~~ you've been hopping round the bush sufficiently long; confess that you're heartily tired of playing Sancho Panza's part to my knightherrantship, and that you long to be once more at the Folly, in your own snug berth

of secretary and factotum.—‘I—master—tired of—I?’ repeated Joe, taken quite aback. ‘Oh, no, sir, I’m not tired of it, by no means. ‘Come now, don’t stand there, you old rascal, and tell such a story with that imperturbable face—you know you’re longing in your heart to be back with your old master once more.

“ ‘Why, why, your honour—hear to me in this—I must say a better master never could be, and for the matter of that, I shouldn’t feel any great ejection at taking up, as you call it, my old berth, for I must say ‘twas never one of the worst—but Lor’ bless ye, sir, ‘twould never do to let the old admiral know I wanted to come back—why I should lead such a life, by jingo! as man never led in this blessed world—I shouldn’t be able to say the nose on my face was my own.’

“ ‘If that be all that disturbs you, then set your mind at rest, you old rogue—for the admiral lets out in his letter, that he’s just as much in want of you, as you of him’—‘No, now does he, your honour?’—half disbelieving me, and yet overjoyed at the news.—I read him the passage.—‘Hang it!’ said Joe, ‘if the old admiral isn’t the kindest-hearted soul that ever God put breath of life into! And, please the Lord I live to see the poor old gentleman once more, if ever I leave him again till the life’s clean out of him or me, may I never be called Joe Royal!’ The warmth and enthusiasm of Joe’s feelings had called into his eyes some traces of a womanish weakness, which he turned away to conceal. I told him that he might comfort himself with soon obtaining the object of his desires, as from some other private letters, I had reason to believe we were on the point of being recalled home. The faithful creature then went off to regain his composure, at leisure, and rejoice over a change of destiny, which I knew him to desire more than any other.

“ Kerslake, by the death of a distant relative, has come in for a considerable property—part of it in Spain. Happen what may to him, he is a man radically bad—a selfish libertine to boot.

“ September.—My private information proves correct—return to Spithead with Lord Bridport, Admiral Harvey, in the Prince of Wales, being left in command of the remainder of the fleet, to watch that of the French, now scattered between L’Orient and Brest.

“ Anchored at Spithead—surgeon advises me to get my name on the guardship’s books, and obtain from four to six

month's leave, for change of scene and relaxation—no particular objection to that. Proposed, therefore, to go on shore at once, and get out to the Folly.

Hark, the boat is ready, I hear the rattle of the oars. Here, my faithful Royal, I do believe, if there is such a quality as sincerity in the world, that you possess it,—patient bearer of all my caprices,—endure me but a little longer, and the play is o'er! The boat is waiting, the wind is fair, we must be going:—so stow these idle follies in my desk, or as friend Horace more correctly expresses himself,—‘*I puer, atque meo citus haec suscribe libello.*’ But write it in a hand that's legible, and then—why then, Corporal Joe, you'll do more than your master.”

CHAPTER XVII.

I HAD no sooner made my number at the Folly, than I was received by the old veteran with open arms. Leave!—I should have a twelvemonth's leave if need be, and the whole race of youngsters having been duly anathematized *en masse*, and the villainous practice of cutting-down exclaimed against in particular, the admiral placed my hand in that of Cornelia: telling me, that if a perfect restoration to health depended on the nurse, I by experience knew the goddess, to whom my prayers were to be directed.

On hearing this gallant speech of the old warrior's, I told him I began to grow rather jealous, lest it should have been a practice of such idolatry in my absence, which now made him so much at home in proposing it to me.

“Nay, nay, boy, no fear of that, d'ye see, for this reason—another sly worshipper whom I could name without much difficulty, d'ye mark me?—has managed to take up all the spare room in that little shrine. Hard work it would be, I take it, to rout him out. What say you, Cornelia?”

The conscious blood circled in her cheek as her glowing eyes met mine. Withdrawing her hand from the admiral's grasp, she sought the window, and stepped forth upon the quarter-deck,

As I gazed upon her fine form, which she carried with the grace that seldom fails to distinguish a well-bred foreigner, I felt my bosom agitated with a strange and varied emotion—rapturous, intense, and yet so closely allied to pain! So vio-

lently did my heart beat, that I raised my handkerchief in the involuntary fear of a relapse of my torturing complaint.

Why I should be thus agitated at the simple presence of Cornelia I know not, thought I. Without one motive for either checking or disguising the affection that has sprung up between us—what is there to fear? I thought, it is true, of another alliance which had been marked out for me, but as instantly recalled my father's advice, never to sacrifice my happiness to ambition. Happen what may, my profession will still at least be open to me—What, with these lungs?

“Well, my dear boy,” said the admiral, at the end of a long conversation, suddenly interrupting me in a deep reverie by laying his hand on mine, “how say you, Charles? How goes on the preparation for the memoirs? Hard at work—eh?—have you been? Hope you've not forgotten to keep that journal I spoke of?”

“No, admiral, I've kept it very faithfully, as you shall see.”

“That's right, boy, that's right—'twill get ye up, as it were, for the more serious work of the memoirs. The memoirs,” slapping me familiarly on the knee—“the memoirs are the thing—they'll be the very making of ye—the more I think of it, more I'm convinced they'll be the very fortune of ye. I've thought of ye, boy, while you've been working away at sea. Got all my papers in order for ye—lettered—numbered—and labelled—ye'll be able to put your finger on every jack of them at a moment's notice.”

I was about to make some reply expressive of my thanks, when the corporal entered with a face which bespoke evil tidings.

“What is the matter, Royal?” said I; the corporal shook his head. “Has anything happened on board?”

“Captain Burgos!” whispered the corporal in my ear.

“What of him, Royal?”

“Alas! sir! poor gentleman!” Joe turned away his face from mine, looking out into the grounds as he continued—“he was a kind master, and a good officer—aye, and a seaman's friend every inch of him!”

“He 'was,' Joe! What do you mean by 'was?'”

“Aye, sir, he *was*!—and more's the misfortune for them that sailed with him, he *was* all that,—aye, and more than ever he will be again; and saving my regular old master there—the admiral, and you, Mister Charles,—I'd never wish to meet a fairer spoken gentleman or a better man;—so may he

never be wanting in some old shipmate aloft, to give his true character, for he'll never hoist a pennant below here no more."

"Merciful powers ! Royal, is Captain Burgos dead ? What has happened to him ? When did he die ?"

"Don't know, sir, any of us, any more than the babe unborn—went into his cabin at six o'clock this morning to call him as usual, and there he was, with his head hanging out over one side of his cot, as it might be, quite dead, and almost as cold as a stone."

"Do you tell me so ?"

"Aye, indeed, do I, sir. The surgeons have been all very busy trying if they can do anything, but it's all over. I've just brought the body, sir, ashore to Haslar Hospital, and thought I'd better come out and tell the admiral of it as soon as might be."

Poor Captain Burgos ! This was, indeed, a sudden cutting off from life—another friend lost to me ! Was I then so rich in these that I could spare them thus successively, and in so short a space ?

In a few days my name was entered on board the guardship, and my mind set at ease by the possession of admiralty leave for five months. This being the arrangement contemplated, the admiral applied—immediately after the death of poor Captain Burgos, and before his successor was appointed—to the first lieutenant, who, fulfilling the promises of his late superior, discharged Royal from the books and exchanged Will Watch into the guardship to which I was appointed ; receiving a dozen fresh hands in return. To this indulgence was also added, leave to visit his friends once more.

Honest Joe Royal, seeing, and it must be added, rejoicing that his bout of rambling was over, now took to his old duties with renovated vigour. Interminable yarns touching and concerning the sacking of Toulon, the glories of the 1st of June, and very considerable strictures on the indecisive affair off Bretagne, together with Lord Howe and the Channel fleet, Lord Hood and the Mediterranean, were also added, *ad infinitum*, to a stock by no means small before.

It was on a Monday morning—the breakfast things had been cleared away, the paragraph containing the appointment of the Rutland's new captain had been read and discussed, my arm-chair was drawn up beside that of the admiral Indulg-

ing in a dreamy ecstacy of admiration, I was watching the light form of Cornelia sporting in the warm sun of a winter's morning.

"Charles, my boy," said the admiral, "the mention of the Rutland's new captain, reminds me that the news of poor Burgos's death interrupted our discussion about your journal."

"It did, sir."

"Ay,—well, if ye happen to have it handy, and could spare time to read me your last voyage, I'd be much obliged t'ye."

Producing my note-book, I instantly complied with his request.

"Very good, boy!" said the admiral, "very good! That affair of Bridport's was certainly not so successful as it might have been, but still, d'ye mark me, you must not be too severe in these matters, for more reasons than one." Here the old admiral settled himself in his chair with a dignity that might have become a judge. "First, d'ye see—it isn't in consonance with the tone and spirit of the service, that a commander-in-chief should be arraigned and condemned without a hearing, by any officer who may happen to be serving under him. This, d've see, master midshipman, was never intended by the rules of the navy. Next, you'll observe, you should be very wary at all times—so juvenile as you are—of censuring the proceedings of your seniors, for this, youngster, is not in accordance with nature; and, thirdly, you should never presume to judge of the duties of a station in which—at any rate, as yet—you have had no opportunity of trying your own strength and weakness—for this, Charles, is unfair from man to man: still there is a good deal in your journal which is very commendable. I like to see young people observant, and I'm glad, too, to remark, that you do not negligently let the year go by, without reflecting on the progress which, during that time, we have been able to make in the war. I like it, too, boy, for another thing; I believe it shows what ye thought and felt, without concealment or hypocrisy—none of your special show books written to please my ear, and only fit to light my pipe. But still, it has one great fault—'tis too brief."

"True, sir, but—" "Yes, yes, it will doubtless do very well for a memorandum of your own—of no moment here or there—but when you come to write those memoirs—"

“True, admiral, that would, indeed, be a very different thing!”

“It would, boy, it would; and just to give ye an idea of the way it should be done, I’ve determined to take advantage of your being here at the Folly, to commence a little of it myself: just to set the affair going, d’ye mark me? I’ll take care, boy, it shan’t be any labour to you, so I’ve ordered Corporal Royal to get every thing ready, and be in attendance himself at eleven o’clock, in my secretary’s cabin—my cot has been moved upstairs again. Hark!—there’s eleven striking! Come, I dare say we’ll find Master Joe there waiting further orders.”

“Then take my arm, sir.”

“Thank ye, boy,—d’ye see, it will be no fatigue to you, Charles, simply to run over Royal’s rough copy of the manuscript, and correct the dog’s bad spelling, and as for my dictation, why the time of a poor old fellow like myself, had as well—ay, and better—be devoted to such a purpose, than thrown away in burning my cane, with poking a fire I can’t see.”

As the admiral finished this sentence, he arranged himself comfortably in his easy seat, and I, having closed the door, took mine near the fire; as for the secretary-corporal, there he sat at his desk as immovable and upright as Eddystone Lighthouse,—looking neither to the right nor left, but grasping his pen, already filled with ink, big with the importance of his station, and rapt in proud anticipations of the space he was to fill in the eyes of posterity.

“I think,” said the admiral, after a reflective pause, “twill be wisest to begin with the title-page.”

“I think so too, sir,” I replied.

“Ay,” resumed the admiral, “that does, indeed, seem to be the gammoning of the craft—and you know, Charles, that pretty well the first step towards rigging a ship is the gammoning her bow-sprit.”

“Yes, yes, admiral.”

“Well then, corporal, write—**THE LIFE AND SERVICES OF PHILIP FLUKE, Admiral of the Blue.** *Edited from his own Memoirs by Charles*—but stay, boy, t’will be but fair to leave a space for your style and titles. I hope you’ll live one day to earn something for yourself, and then you can fill the blank

up. So, then, how does it run now—‘THE LIFE AND SERVICES OF PHILIP FLUKE, *Admiral of the Blue. Edited from his own Memoirs.*’ What think ye of that, Charley?”

“That nothing could well be better, sir.”

“Glad ye like it!—but stay, there’s one alteration; instead of ‘edited from his own memoirs,’ say, ‘edited from his own papers.’ For ‘twould be childish in me to think—old as I am and feeble—that I should ever live to complete them myself; I just set them a-going, and scarcely contemplated that. No, say ‘edited from his own papers,’—‘twould be wrong to hope for more! Now then, Royal, for the preface.” And after the same manner the preface was written, and the memoirs begun. The admiral dictating to Royal, and the corporal copying down with heart and soul in his very best small Roman text.

The first step of so methodical a person as the admiral, was to allot a certain portion to be performed each day. In this, I must confess, he was not wholly unmerciful; since he fixed the quantity at five pages. This then was duly dictated and indited between the hours of eleven and three in the morning. I corrected it between eight and nine in the evening: and the corporal then transcribed it fairly by half-past ten, at which time it was doomed to undergo a fourth and final process.

The admiral had for years made it an invariable rule of his life, ever to be in bed by the last-named hour—half-past ten. On the evening of the day on which our literary labours were thus auspiciously commenced, I was summoned from the drawing-room by the corporal; he told me that his master, who had just got to bed, sent his love to me, and if I could afford him a spare half-hour, he should feel much obliged.

Hurrying to his bed-room, I found the veteran comfortably propped up as usual in his capacious cot; everything that he might by any possibility want during the night, was placed on a dumb waiter beside him. At the distance of two paces, the corporal presided at a table, whose tapers were, however, shaded from the admiral’s eyes, while it upheld sundry decanters and glasses, together with a tumbler-full of hot spirit and water, which seemed especially to belong to the corporal. Before this worthy lay spread out a pile of papers, pens, and ink.

As these last articles caught my eye, I confess I gave an voluntary shudder. What! more of the *cacoethes scribendi*?

This mania is too violent to last long. Heaven send it may not be the death of my old friend.

The admiral pointed to a chair beside his bed—"I've just sent for ye, Charles," said he, "that ye may have the advantage of hearing the fair transcript read. In a matter such as this—d'ye mark me, boy?—when an officer is transmitting down to posterity the materials for future history, and condensing, as it were, into one page, the services of a long life,—the benefit of his successors in the noble profession to which we have the honour to belong, renders it imperative on every writer, to omit no precaution that can add accuracy to his production. On such an aim, I contend, boy, that no indolent or selfish motive should encroach. You will appreciate my intentions, therefore, by the pains I take, when I tell you that I have determined to hear Royal read to me every night—before I close a lid, boy,—such a portion of the memoirs, as may have been written during the day. Besides, d'ye see, it will be an additional safeguard to reflect on that which I have already given, as it were, to the world, as well as to arrange more maturely that which is to come next. This—d'ye mark me—I shall have ample time to do in the long intervals of the night, which such a poor old hulk is condemned to pass before he can get asleep. Now, then, Royal, begin."

The admiral having turned himself on his side, with his face towards me in an attitude perfectly suited to repose, and yet apparently one of great attention, the secretary at once began.

Touched by the dignity of his subject, honest Joe with a strong voice, the gravest look, and a pronunciation the most slow and solemn, commenced reading the title-page—proceeded with the preface, and entered on the birth, parentage, and education.

There were, as you know, only five pages to get through, yet considerably before the third page was finished, a slight noise proceeded from the admiral, which certified to me in the most ample and satisfactory manner, that the gallant old author was already fast asleep.

The corporal, however, far too deeply engaged to notice such a trifle, or indeed aught but his own fine writing, proceeded on to the very last colon, or I should rather say, period, and then after an expressive pause, as much as to say "think of that!"—he slowly shut the book and turned his glance on me. Pressing my finger on my lip, and giving him

in silence to understand how matters went, I extinguished everythign save the ordinary night-lamp, and making the surprised secretary swallow off his jorum, and take his precious MS. under his arm, we quitted the room in the utmost stealth, leaving the veteran to his well-earned repose.

This, then, was the scene, or, I should rather say, farce, which night after night was enacted. With regard to the quantity to be written, the admiral became perfectly feverish and uneasy, if from any cause he felt himself unable to get through it. Like Penelope's web, however, the veteran went back as much by night, as he got forward by day; for no sooner had the secretary turned over the second page, than somehow or other his master was fast asleep. This circumstance, it is true, Joe never deigned to notice, but read as on the first night, to the end of his portion, and then retired. Not so quietly, however, did Philip Fluke submit to this arrangement, for on the morning after each reading, he attacked Joe in sound terms for what he termed his "rascally reading."

"Hang ye, sir!—ye obstinate old fool!" he would say, "I can't think what's come to ye. Ye used to be able once to spell through a letter or a book, and even now, ye can read the newspapers for your own amusement, but no sooner do I set ye on a task of importance—one, sir, that you are honoured by performing, than ye try to see how ill ye can fulfil your part—I tell ye, sir, over and over again—you old stiff-necked horse!—that after ye get over the second page, there's no hearing a word ye say."

"Beg your excellency's pardon—I never make any difference in my reading—I dress it all, sir, straight on from right to left, rank and file, till I come to the end of the muster-roll, and so you'd hear, your excellency, if you'd only try to keep awake while I——"

"Awake, you scoundrel!—sleep, you impudent jackanapes! and this to me!—who very often can't get a wink—ugh—ugh—ugh—not a wink, I say, throughout the night; and this impudent bare-faced falsehood, you old swab, to excuse your own broken-winded snuffle!—I tell ye, sir, once more, that ye no sooner come to the third page, than you mumble, mumble away, so that not a word can be heard; just as you do very often outside my door of a morning."

"Well, your excellency——"

"Come, sirrah—no reply—I'll cure ye o' this trick o'

yours, for take my word, wherever I hear you haul your mumbling tacks on board—there, at that very place, you begin, Master Joe, the next evening."

The admiral being as good as his word, and still never being able to watch out more than the two fatal pages, thus necessarily lost three a night, until the arrears of hearing, having as in a chancellor's court, got immeasurably astern of the business transacted, the bulk of what was written, might have convinced the poor old officer of his somniferous error, had he been any longer blessed with sight. This not being the case, Joe very wisely determined at last to give in ; taking, without reply, his master's rebukes on the score of his "mumbling," and never again presuming to hint the possibility of great Homer's napping.

In return, however, for these concessions, Joe looked for others towards himself, equally absurd and much less innocent. Joe certainly had the most lordly notion of orthography of any man I ever met. Correction! Defend me!—never was a corregidor more needed even in the sinning city of Seville. The rough copy was a mere blot!—Still, however, the obstinate old fellow would rather have suffered any punishment, than been made to do what was right.

Correct his blunders in whatever way I would, he never failed to take the first opportunity of transcribing the word or sentence exactly as he had first written it, till at length I gave it up in despair.

I had now been six weeks at the "Folly," and the quiet amusement of the life I led, had indeed done wonders. All pain and weakness had left me, more particularly that distressing nervous feeling of apprehension which seemed to prostrate the soul even to the very dust. I had begun to think of turning my wandering steps somewhere, though at such a season, with Christmas at hand, I knew not where I could be better off ; and *Cornelia!* How could I leave her side when it was in my own power to remain at will?

I was saved the trouble of thinking, however ; one morning, soon after breakfast, just before the commencement of the writing, a carriage and four drove up. The Earl of S— announced. "Don't know him—show him in." His lordship was a thin, gentlemanlike old man, and with an ease that bespoke his long acquaintance with the world, introduced himself to the admiral as a friend of *Donna L—*.

What think you that he came to announce?—no less a fact than that she had made him the happiest man alive. Yes, yes, no doubt—but he previously, by-the-bye, was to make her—Countess of S——. The happiest man alive! Query, thought I, the most miserable?

However, it was no affair of mine, but as the bridegroom was to be Cornelia's father-in-law, I naturally looked at him attentively. Four or five and sixty winters were the fewest that had passed over him—good breeding—good carriage—a slight stoop—thin features—cold expression—light figure—bland superficial smile. Cornelia entered unannounced—I watched him as he looked at her. So, thought I, my noble *roué*, you are caught at last! and by a widow! Well, I wish you joy!

The story of his love with madame was droll, certainly. The widowed Lady C—— resided at no very great distance from the “Folly;” she was a little *passé*, but still set up claims to beauty. Hers was of the cast denominated blonde. Time had a little dimmed the lily, however; the rose, too, it might be, had grown a thought paler, the eye had sunk from its full swelling form, and the heavenly blue of youth had subsided into gray; still she had many suitors; but there was one who figured in her train, to whom she would willingly have given a legal claim to put the rest to flight; but alas, this honoured individual seemed in no hurry for this promotion—it was the Earl of S——. But his fate was already decided! Secure him, she was determined she would, and the heart impenetrable to her unaided charms, she now resolved to sap by combination. How was this to be effected? She would consider—“Segrave, order the carriage.” Nothing like a rapid drive for the excitement of invention. Her card-list—what had she to do?—a string of names appeared. No morning visits! “Admiral Fluke—a beautiful Spanish refugee—call on her?—said to be very dark—witty?—so, so—Lord Charles's report. Drive to Fluke's Folly.”

Scarcely had the eye of Lady C—— rested on madame, than her plan was formed. Spanish, unfortunately, she boasted none; her French was, however, good. So very fortunate, madame herself was a native of the great nation. Lady C—— was a politician. “Beautiful France! who could not weep to see the pearl beneath the feet of swine?—such a country!” Lady C—— had by heart the whole tour, France

and the Continent to boot. Madame was charmed—my lady was delighted! What a brunette,—how dark—how *very* dark! Was there ever such a *foil*! Madame could not reside at the “Folly,” of course. *Could* she favour Lady C—— with a *short* visit—only a *very* little visit? She would be but too happy! and her daughter—her beautiful daughter?—No, the admiral begged to retain Cornelia. Then madame would come alone? She would—how kind! how very kind! The friends of an hour flew into one another’s arms with all the grace of Raffaelle’s angels, and kissed with the sincerity of _____. Did I say sincerity?

In a week madame was at the exquisite villa of Lady C——. You have heard of hearts taken by beauty, by sentiment, by wit, by figure, accomplishments, and even contract—but one by contrast? No? Such then has been the case—the heart was my good Lord S——’s. In due time his lordship declared that stronghold fallen. Madame bore the intelligence to Lady C——. She drew her ladyship aside to a private conference. “Lord S—— has desired me to speak to you, my dear kind friend, on a subject that he affirms to be the nearest and dearest to his heart.” How throbbed her ladyship’s at such a sentence.

“He has felt the delicacy of speaking himself—”

“I admit it, my dear friend.”

“I knew you would, and therefore to be brief—”

“Yes, brief, my love.”

“Hopes that you will pardon him for seeming to interfere with your comfort in order to secure his own happiness.”

“Let him not think of it.”

“Ah, my charming friend! Then you do indeed give your full consent to his proposals for the hand of your—”

“Ladyship?”

“No, my lady—that of your very humble servant”—with astonishment and a profound curtsey.

“How horrible!” shrieked one dear friend—“How droll!” exclaimed the other. Lady C—— was borne out in a faint, and madame took a stroll in the garden, to reflect on this *contretemps*. During which, by the by, the disputed suitor had announced to the admiral, the measure of happiness which, to use his lordship’s words, “now awaited him!”

Somehow—though the world has never had it explained—

Lady C—— immediately fell sick. Madame, as her dear friend, staid—perhaps, you would imagine, to nurse her. Madame was sorry—she was penetrated with the most perfect regret at the illness of the charming Lady C——, but the earl was so impatient. The marriage—the “Folly.” She was compelled to return to her daughter and arrange the day.

Return she did, and despite of the admiral wishing that the ceremony were to be performed on the borders of the Red Sea, or perhaps more fitly at the fountain of the waters of strife, she nevertheless managed to gain her point, and the first of January was named for the auspicious event.

“Ye see, boy!” said the admiral, “I thought I might as well kill two birds with one stone; and as I was forced to have a jollification whether I would or not, why there was nothing like making the most of it. Grand day here the first of January, I promise you. Hark ye, boy—got a letter last night from my old friend the Duke of N——d; tells me there’s a promotion coming out on the first. Phil Fluke to get a step by it. Admiral of the white, boy! always have a jollification when I get a step!—always have had, lad, always will. Ah, well-a-day! I suppose I shall never get another. There is only one more to get—wrong to hope it—wrong to hope it, old fellow like me. No, no, must make the most of this, never live to have another. Come, boy, come and see how Joe’s got on with my new flag. St. George’s ensign now, boy—fine flag—smacks of old England, St. George and the Dragon—fought under it often—never do so again! Your turn now, boy! Come along then, and let’s have a rig at old Joe. The old horse has a gang of darning women under him, stitching away at it for life and death, I warrant me.” * * * *

“And so to-morrow is new year’s day!” sentimentally drawled Joe, as he warmed his hands over the hall fire, while the servants were taking up the tea; “I must remind his excellency of the wine for to-morrow’s breakfast.” In a few minutes he made his entrée into the drawing-room, in the wake of the tea-urn, and having brought up by the side of his master, waited till the bustle had subsided.

“Enemy fairly in sight now, your honour! Won’t your excellency be getting all ready for coming to close quarters to-morrow morning?”

“ Ay, Joe, to be sure I will—what’s in the wind now ?”

“ No wine out in the fore hold, your excellency, for to-morrow’s breakfast.”

“ True, Joe, true ; I’ll see to that presently, get the keys and lights ready, by the time we pipe the hands up from catlap,” (send away the tea-things,) “ and then we’ll see to it.”

Accordingly, as soon as we had finished with the Chinese infusion, the admiral said, “ Come, boy, you’ve never seen the stowage below, have ye ?”

“ No, sir,” I replied.

“ Come, then, your arm, Charles, and we’ll soon let ye know we have a drop of wine under hatches yet.” The first of the cellars that we entered, the admiral chose to call the spirit room. It was a capacious vault, well stocked with port, claret, sherry, and madeira, for ordinary consumption ; but the one beyond the after hold, as the veteran termed it, seemed as dear to him as the apple of his eye. It was of immense size, filled with three times as much wine as the old officer could ever expect to consume, and not a bin or a bottle was there to be found in it, from canary sack to cyprian nectar, which had not some particular claim to the veteran’s care and notice.

At last we came to the bottom of the cellar—“ the after-most bulkhead,”—here we halted.

“ D’ye see that pigeon-hole, Charles.”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Well, boy ! that’s what I call ‘ the wonderful hole.’ But just the year before God was pleased to take my eyesight from me, I was going my rounds here, seeing what wines were wanting for the year’s fill up, and thinking, may be, of the old scenes and places where this stock was first got from. Well, boy, I was just overhauling the place, in short, when I struck my cane against the aftermost bulkhead. Egad, it shook !—struck again, too hollow a sound for solid brick and mortar. Had in a mason, and down it came in as little time as you’d take to sheet home a main-topsail—there was a range of bins, with seventeen dozen of wine—bricked up as nicely as might be. What it is, boy, we can’t make out to this hour, saying that it’s right good wine. Fine pale pink colour—clear as crystal, sparkles like a brilliant, but yet it’s not champagne. Joe, get out for to-morrow a dozen of the vinum mirabile—for that, d’ye see, boy, I thought was the best name for it.

Ali, there's something mysterious about the matter. For aught I know, it may be as old as the house, d'ye see, and that was first built by a Dutchman in the reign of Elizabeth. I bought it, by-the-by, of a fellow who hadn't a scrap of title to show for it, any better than forty years' possession. That was enough for me! Got it cheap, a few thousands—prize money—prize money, eh, boy? Last rightful owner went abroad on a cruise of pleasure, and never was heard of; left it to his agent's care, and so it came down."

In the meantime, Joe had been collecting wines by the dozen from half the bins in the place, and putting them on a large sort of barrow, carried them out into the "spirit room," or ordinary cellar, to be ready for the marriage breakfast of the following morning, when the admiral's "after hold" was closed: he himself desiring me to observe the locks, for which alone he had given fifty-four guineas.

* * * * *

"—And what thought you of the wedding, Charles?" said Cornelia, her eyes filling as she turned her looks on me. The question was repeated.

"Thought!" on what, indeed, could my thoughts rest, and such a face before me! "The wedding!—I thought it was superb—and a merry day, I doubt not, the admiral made of it, with all his naval friends, whom we left behind congratulating him on his 'step,' but still"—a sigh filled up the discontinued sentence, and pressing her soft fingers to my lips, I looked out from the carriage window.

"Yes, indeed," resumed Cornelia, "it was superb! The crowd of officers all in their splendid uniforms, and then, too, your fair—your dazzlingly fair countrywomen, and the sumptuous breakfast, and the admiral—the dear—dear admiral:—would—thought I, as he gave away the bride, oh, would that she had indeed been his daughter, and then I, too, should have been his child—then—then perhaps I should not have been doomed to part from him!"

Her tears were falling fast and warm upon my hand, but too quickly they found their way to my heart.

"But I—I," her sobs forbid her further utterance for the moment. "I have no parent now; my mother in a bridal dress, my father, my poor father, but one short twelvemonth since—

oh, how the scene of this morning recalled the hour in which I first beheld you. Here, gold and glitter—there, carnage and despair. Both have cost me dear. Merciful Heaven ! where on earth has my heart a claim for kindness now !”

“ Here—here—beloved *Cornelia* !” I whispered, overcome at the sight of her grief, and folding her gently to my bosom. “ Here, in the breast of one who sues to you for a title stronger than any—grant him but that, and the arm of a father shall protect you, the tenderness of a mother shall watch over you—the heart of a lover shall adore——” She did not resist the appeal, but, weeping like an infant, engrossing from its helplessness, replied to my entreaties but with tears. That silence, so sorrowful, and yet so eloquent ! What did it not express ?—it witnessed the tendering—it spoke the receiving of a contract by which our lives were bound ! Our loves, begun in scenes of blood, and ratified in tears, in what were they to close ?—Why—why, oh trembling heart, dost thou shrink back from the dim advancing shadows of futurity ?

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN another fortnight my leave would expire, and I must then forsake the presence of a beloved object, and re-embark in the dangers of my profession,—that perilous but dear excitement. There to strive for pre-eminence and fame ! And is not the final object crowning your struggle to be a grave—a grave as narrow as that of the meanest of mankind ? Poor wretched worm ! why wander further for that which will not be denied to you even by the very soil on which you tread ! Here on the banks of * *, one of the most beautiful rivers of Devon.

“ Well,” said I, “ life must be endured ! There are minds so dull as not to feel the galling of its fetters, but the prize is rather to those, who, with the keenest sensibility to feel, unite the greatest firmness to endure ! I must be gone. Let me seek *Cornelia*, and break to her my resolution.”

Turning from the walk on which I had been pacing—lovely in summer, but now desolated by the icy breath of winter, I made for the house. Since the completion of the happy cerc-

mony, we had been staying at * * Park, an estate in Devonshire belonging to the bridegroom.

Though it would have been folly to expect that my lord and his elected were to prove a brace of turtle doves, as devoted as if his age had only numbered two-and-twenty, and hers sixteen, yet, nevertheless, the few weeks during which I remained with them, found them so far taken up with one another, that they felt themselves somewhat independent of that heartless buzz of society, which relieves our solitude without exciting our regard.

To Cornelia and myself, thus left almost to ourselves, this brief space was one of quiet enjoyment, approaching, perhaps, as near to bliss as anything that man can know on earth. Alas, that it had already flown! Something seemed to whisper to me that this sweet calm was indeed the prelude to an awful storm, and that strange and startling events were already crowding on my brief existence.

“ You must go then to the Folly! ” repeated Cornelia ; “ then I will go too! ” Fearful that this might be opposed, I hinted at the prudence of allowing me to bid adieu to her at once. No, she would see me to the last. A boundless field of danger was before me ; who could assure her that we might ever meet again ? besides, she promised to return to the poor old admiral, and if she went not now, she believed that the opportunity would in future be carefully denied to her.

What were her reasons for this conclusion ? I know not ; her resolves were taken, and she communicated them to the countess. The mother commanded—stormed, but the daughter was firm—immovable. My lord lectured her on the propriety of the case, but Cornelia answered him in Spanish.

Pleased as I was that she should have gained her point, and delighted with her society, still, as we returned to Portsmouth, I could not help considering whether I had done right to peril all my happiness in the keeping of a spirit so resolved, so little brooking the most trivial let. But it was done ; I had chosen my mate from the brood of the falcon, and could no longer look for the tameness of the robin.

We found the admiral delighted as ever to receive us ; warmly congratulating me on my having passed my examination as lieutenant on my way through town, and overjoyed to regain Cornelia, whom he affectionately termed his child. It was evident that he had shared her suspicions of the countess being unwilling that her daughter should return to Portsmouth,

for the comfort of him whose roof had been her shelter, when the world around her was a desert. Breakfast had scarcely disappeared on the third morning following our arrival at the "Folly," when the admiral drew a packet from his pocket and placed it in my hands.

"There, Charles, my boy, is a little present for ye—let me know what ye think of it?" Picture to yourself my gratitude—my joy, when I read my commission and appointment, as lieutenant, to His Majesty's fine forty-four gun frigate, the *Lavinia*—Captain Carrington.

Alas, she was already at anchor at the Nore when I returned from my leave. As it was thought the North Sea might become her station, I was ordered to join immediately, which I did, taking with me my friend Will Watch. In a few days the foretopsail was fluttering from its yard, and the blue peter from the masthead. That night found us bounding down the channel with a spread of canvas and a fine breeze, bound—contrary to all our expectations—to the Downs, where a convoy was collecting for the blue waters of the Mediterranean. You can imagine what were the feelings of my heart, when having come to an anchor and finished keeping the first watch, I retired to rest, after taking another look at the portrait of her whom I could not help fancying I should see no more.

"Well," thought I, as I dressed on the following morning, "here am I, fairly launched in my new capacity of lieutenant—I only hope I may find my present shipmates not less pleasant than were many of my last. One thing I could have wished—namely that Kerslake belonged to any other ship save the one which holds myself; strange it certainly is, that he should have been promoted so nearly at the same time as myself, and appointed, too, to the same frigate. However, here we are, and as he at present seems to be the only one on board, against whom I have any very decided dislike, I think I need not fear being pretty comfortable. Captain—evidently a good fellow, though not a little mad on the score of the illustrious Cervantes and the immortal Don Quixote, of which worthies he is eternally raving—mixing them up with incessant quotations from the learned Vaderbruggius.

Kerslake having been promoted a month before myself, was, of course, my senior, and I relieved his watch. This, as I had the forenoon turn of duty, and it was just on the point of striking eight, I should consequently have to do as soon as I had

WILL WATCH.

breakfasted. On reaching the main deck, I there found my brother officer, who had come down to order the sentry to strike the bell, and was standing on the starboard side, opposite to the sentinel and myself; he was looking forward very intently at some object that attracted his notice, and therefore did not observe me.

I scarcely know what suggested such a thought, but as I looked at his person—certainly more attractive than otherwise—I could not help asking myself, what is it that makes me dislike that man—without a quarrel, almost without a reason—one who has sought my friendship—but no wonder! Libertinage and Atheism after all, are hateful professions of doctrine!

Scarcely had these thoughts passed through my mind when I observed two females standing by the waist ladder, talking to one of the seamen. “ You stay here,” said the latter to his friends, “ you stay here, while I just jump down below, and get that out of my chest, and I’ll be back to you in a minute.” I thought I knew the voice, but as the mainmast and the surrounding pumps were between us, I was unable to distinguish more. Indeed I scarcely gave a thought as to who they might be, until they turned towards me, and I saw Kerslake approaching to address them.

The eldest of the fair ladies was an exceedingly tall, powerful woman, who, but for her dress, which, by-the-by, betrayed somewhat of a holiday finery, might certainly have passed for one of the lords of the creation. In her face too—rather of the rubicund species—there was both good-temper and daring, and though its expression on the whole defended her from being thought ill-natured, it yet vouches, nevertheless, for her maintaining her own rights, after a manner the most primitive, if not the most polished.

But the younger female—how shall I be able to convey to you any adequate notion of her appearance? Certainly for the walk of life to which she evidently belonged, she was the most perfectly-formed, I may say, the most lovely creature I ever beheld. Tall as she was, the swelling fulness of figure was so beautifully proportioned, that you could find no fault either with the redundancy of the one, or the height of the other—while as for her face! I have seen many more intelligent, and such was Cornelia’s, but one more taking I certainly never beheld. Beaming ~~with~~ youth, health, and innocence; and yet, on one more ~~ly~~ fair you could not wish to

look! Oh, it was indeed a countenance that no one could contemplate without emotion, and yet—alas!—

No sooner had the seaman, whoever he was, jumped down the hatchway, than his female friends were, on the instant, accosted by Kerslake, who I now perceived to have been watching the late conference. The unusual beauty of the fair visitor had so far interested me, that I determined to wait and see how she received the attentions of my messmate.

I know not why,—for the girl was to me a perfect stranger, yet I felt as if I should have been annoyed had she received the intrusion of Kerslake with the smirking and complacent smile of an ordinary rustic. There was a bashfulness—a native modesty in the expression of her countenance, which seemed to forbid such a conclusion.

Often as women complain of being insulted by the importunities of men, I am afraid that too often the blame—wittingly or not—lies wholly with the fair complainants. Where is even the novice in affairs of gallantry, who is ignorant of the encouragement to be gathered from the briefest look, the slightest pause, the merest gesture. Now and then, perchance, the ungenerous impertinence of the intruder is alone in fault. Such was the case at present.

No soon was Kerslake seen approaching, than the girl, turning her back towards us, quickly, but quietly, moved aside to let him pass; taking refuge, at the same time, behind the person of her elderly friend, who then drew up between two guns.

Far from being disconcerted at this, Kerslake walked towards the strangers, and at once accosted them, with all the freedom of a man perfectly at ease, and too well satisfied with himself, to inquire whether his presence were desirable to others.

“Well, my old lady!” said he, “the top of the morning to you!”—the “old lady” curtseyed. “This is your daughter, old soul?”—trying to take the hand of the latter, as she retired in much confusion.

“Yes, sir, it is,” another curtsey—“and with your honour’s pardon, the less ye have to say to her the more she’ll be obliged to you.”

Any sensible person now, thought I, would take a hint from the firm and respectful manner of both parties, and perceive that it was time to withdraw. Not so Kerslake: such a re-

buff as this, was not calculated to soothe his pride, particularly when he knew that it was under the eye of the sentry, for I have said he was ignorant of my presence.

“Heigho, old lady!” exclaimed he, returning to the charge, “what! you so old a stager, and not know the customs of shipboard!” pretending to think it a capital joke, and still struggling to get hold of the young girl’s arm. Seeing that this pretty brother-officer of mine was carrying his annoyance too far, I coughed aloud, but he was too intently engaged to hear me.

“Custom of shipboard,” returned the mother, interposing her brawny arms. “Marry, forsooth! and what of them, Mr. Lieutenant—that you should go to insult an honest woman’s daughter?”

“Insult, you old fool! don’t you know yet, that coming under the half-deck without leave, forfeits a kiss to the officer of the watch.” “Come, come, sir, that won’t do.” “Oh, as for you, old girl, you’re safe enough, so you may stand aside at once; but as for your daughter, I’ll have——”

“Not you, young swaggerer!”—said the staunch dame, suddenly extending her open hand, with the intention simply of keeping off Kerslake, but with the unhappy effect of striking him full in the face.

But a moment before, he had pretended to be laughing, and I, seeing that he was getting decidedly the worst of the fray, had been content—and if the truth must out—much amused, to see him receive the disgrace he so well merited, from the hands of the party he had molested. In an instant, however, the scene was sadly changed. An expression of the most deadly rage shot across the features of the lieutenant—transported by pain, vanity, and passion, he raised his hand, and before I could spring across the deck to intercept it—dealt the poor old woman a blow that made her stagger. The daughter, poor thing, as instantly shrieked out for help, and with the blood boiling in my veins, I leapt to the spot.

What the impulse of the moment might have tempted me to do, I know not—nor, indeed, need I consider, for before I could even utter a word, one of the seamen rushed from forward, and with a single blow, the offender was laid bleeding at my feet.

I looked up—“Heaven have mercy on you, Watch! What have you done?”

“ ‘What have I done?’” cried Will, shaking his fist, as he pointed to the prostrate lieutenant, while his whole frame trembled from the effects of the honest anger now beaming on his fine features. “Do you think, sir, I’ll stand by, and see that rascal strike my own mother—the cowardly villain, that he is!—and I never so much as lift an arm for the old ‘oman that bore me?”

“Put the rascal in irons!” interrupted Kerslake, staggering with a vain effort to lift himself on his knee, while he glared, at the same time, on his unfortunate victim, with a look of the most vindictive malice; rendered still more horrible by the blood that was streaming from a wound in the temple. “Put the mutinous scoundrel, I say, in irons!—as officer of the watch, I order it.”

“You shall have my life first!” cried Will, suddenly springing with his back against the ship’s side, and drawing forth a cutlass from over one of the guns, desperately determined to sell his life as dearly as he could.

By this time the whole ship was in an uproar, officers and men were crowding to the spot, and at my knee were clinging, in supplication and in tears, those two whom I now learnt—thus fatally, and for the first time,—to be the mother of my old protector, and his idolized sister—Fanny—his own “little Fan.”

Raising them up, and giving them into the hands of the mate of the main deck, who stood near me, I beckoned for silence, and first turned to Kerslake—“If you, sir, order the captain of the fore-top into irons—because you are officer of the watch,—you need not trouble yourself on that score; it is past eight o’clock, and I here relieve you of that duty.”

He waved his hand with a ferocious scowl, as if he would have replied, but the effort, added to his loss of blood, caused him to faint.

Directing some of the men to carry him below at once to the surgeon, I advanced to poor Will, still standing at bay, amid his wondering shipmates.—“As for you, Watch, be persuaded by me—you have been guilty of a dreadful breach of discipline, though perhaps it is only what might have happened to anyone under similar circumstances—still you know nothing can bear you out in striking your officer—were such a thing possible, it would be the provocation you have received. Give

up your sword, then, quietly to me, I implore you, both for your sake and my own—it is the only method of proceeding that can save your life—I saw the whole of the affair from beginning to end, and depend upon me for rendering you every justice, let it implicate who it may.” Still he hesitated.—“If, Watch, you will be obedient neither for my sake, nor your own, think,” I whispered—“think of your mother—think of your sister, Will !”

“God reward you, sir, though I never can!” said the poor fellow, dropping the point of his blade, while he slid the hilt of it into my hand: the eye so lately glared by rage and frenzy, became soft as a woman’s, as he followed the sentry to the opposite side of the deck, under arrest; while I ordered the men to return to their breakfasts, from which the cries of his mother and sister had disturbed them.

Pitying the sad situation of the two latter, I told them to dry their tears, and not make any disturbance, for fear they should be hurried out of the ship; and hoping that all might yet go well, I advised them to do this within five minutes at the furthest, during which time they might see and bid farewell to Will, till they next met.

“When and under what circumstances that may be, I shudder to reflect!” thought I, hurrying below, to report the matter to the first lieutenant, and to ask his orders. Had not the captain unfortunately quitted the ship for the shore, since five in the morning, the knowledge of his vicinity would in all probability have prevented the occurrence of this disgraceful scene at the very doors of his cabin.

On my way to the gun-room I met the first lieutenant, Mr. Trysail, scrambling up to the main deck half dressed, with a razor in hand, arrested by the tumult in the middle of shaving, which operation had prevented him, as well as others of my messmates, from coming to ascertain the cause of the disturbance. As soon as I had communicated to him the whole of the details, he rubbed his head in much concern, and after many objurgations, broke out into—

“Pretty work! pretty work! scarcely commissioned, and a fool of a boy gets us in for a life and death court-martial!—What shall I do—don’t like to put Watch in irons without taking any notice of Kerslake—can’t favour him, either—serves him right!—pon my soul!—serves him right!—strike a

woman!! What shall I do with that poor Watch?—’fraid it’s my duty to clap him in limbo, too ; and yet he’s a smart lad, fine, clever, smart fellow, what shall I do, eh ?”

“ Why, sir, if you ask me, and if you find it your duty to put the seaman in irons, which I rather fear it is, I confess I think the most unobjectionable course would be, to issue an order, declaring Mr. Kerslake under arrest, and ordering the master-at-arms to take the necessary means for securing Watch, until the captain shall decide on the matter.”

“ Why, ay, that looks something like it—do you draw up the order, and bring it to me to sign.”

Having done this, Trysail desired me to take a boat, and, landing the mother and sister of the unfortunate prisoner, proceed to the house of Colonel H * *, who resided at the distance of some four miles from the shore. Here I was told I should find the captain, to whom I was to make a report of the morning’s catastrophe.

These instructions received, I made such hasty alteration in my dress as was requisite, and first seeking out Will, read him the order, to prove that he had received every justice. I then exhorted him to be patient, and confide in my unremitting exertions in his favour, gave the necessary instructions to the master-of-arms, had a boat’s crew called away, persuaded Fanny and her mother to get into it, and then delivering the written order to the mate of the watch, in order that it might be circulated throughout the ship, I got into my boat and shoved off.

You may imagine that mine was no very pleasant row to the shore that day ; what with the hysterical sobbing of the sister on one side, and the more hushed but deeper agony of the mother on the other, I declare I never spent a more painful half-hour in my life. We had no sooner gained the beach, than both my passengers declared their firm intention of waiting on Captain Carrington without delay, entreating me at the same time to lend them my assistance in obtaining the interview.

Now, thought I, as the captain models himself on that mirror of chivalry, and flower of gallantry, the immortal Quixote—perhaps there is no more effectual method of helping my unfortunate friend Will, than by letting his beautiful sister plead his cause—that is, if the captain can be of use ;

but my neart sank within me when I considered that her brother had broken through one of the most deadly edicts of our sanguinary code—its penalty was death—and that seldom mitigated for such an offence! The order for a court-martial would in all probability be issued in the course of the afternoon, by the admiral, then lying in the Downs. To crown my forebodings—were we not in the middle of a most determined war, when examples of severity would be gladly but most mistakenly seized on, to awe the disaffected?—Well, however, they shall see Carrington, at all events—they can, I fear, do no more than interest him in the fate of our mutual friend, but even that will be something.

Within twenty minutes I had placed them in a post-chaise, and having fe'd the driver to gain his destination with all possible speed, I directed them to collect themselves and to tell their story clearly. I then followed, myself, on horseback, determining to give them the first audience, to the end that their distress might produce the full effect. When I at length entered the apartment containing my superior officer and his applicants, I found him pacing the room in a state of agitation which denied utterance.

Will's mother and sister were seated on a sofa at the other end of the room, crying, as you may suppose, most bitterly. When the captain saw me enter, he made an effort to come and speak to me; and taking me by the arm, desired to hear my story—I gave it him exactly as I have related it to you. “Poor woman! poor woman!” said he, “what can I do for her?—absolutely nothing! This was just her story word for word. This is misery and affliction itself, Arran, as the Knight of the Mirror assures the immortal Quixote—and all occasioned by that puppy, that—By my honour!—if any harm come to this girl's brother, if I don't ruin him never trust my word again!—I can do nothing—must report it to the admiral, and then comes a court-martial. Alas!—Martial law!—say what I will—the yard-arm—” in a whisper—“must, I fear, be the result—or else going round the fleet—which may be worse. Fool!—puppy!—and poltroon!—To think that this disgraceful scene should have occurred on board my ship!—Tell them—tell them,”—said he, hastening suddenly from the room, “that I go to the admiral to do all I can—put them into the post-chaise and come back to me for a note to take on board.”

No sooner did the captain's petitioners see him about to depart, than they rose in hopes to reach and detain him, but swing to the length of the apartment, he effected his escape.

But he acted from the best motives, for he felt, as he afterwards told me, that his own forebodings as to Will's fate were too great to be concealed. Fearing, therefore, that his hopelessness of the case might appear in his manner, he considered that he had taken the wisest and the kindest course.

As it was, however, I had no trivial task to get Fanny and her mother back into the chaise, and it was only by the most solemn and reiterated promises of exerting every nerve in his favour, and being myself at all times accessible to them, that I could manage it. By my advice they took up their temporary abode at a tavern in Deal, where I promised to report hourly, if it should be necessary, how affairs went on.

Returning to the captain, I found him already mounted; he held a letter in his hand for the first lieutenant, which he ordered me to take forthwith on board, and we set off at full speed for the boats. Captain Carrington having taken the gig in which I came, made at once for the admiral's ship, while I hired a waterman, and returned as quickly as possible to the Lavinia.

The row off to the frigate gave me ample time to reflect on this most unhappy business, and though it may seem much to say, I doubt if even the bosom of poor Will himself contained feelings more deeply sad than did my own. But three brief hours since, and we were both elate of heart, and happy in the prospect of honourable and amusing employment in our profession, looking forward to share, as we had done before, similar dangers and mutual joys, and now without one atom of moral crime on his part. It maddened me to think that for such a mean, dastardly wretch as Kerslake—Will Watch, the fine, generous Will Watch, was to die the death of a dog!—Going round the fleet!—Did they call that mercy? His noble spirit would, I know, prefer death ten thousand times.—And could he not be saved? Would no evidence avert the sentence? Might no intercession avail? “He must—he shall be saved if I peril all for it!—ay, as surely as I hope to be saved myself in a state to come!” said I, as my foot once more touched the deck.

Reporting myself to the first lieutenant, I delivered to him the note from Captain Carrington, and resumed my watch—

not, indeed, to attend to its duties, but to turn over every possible and impossible method of shielding Will from the bloody sword impending over him, by a tie to which that of a hair would have been security itself! After some minutes' consideration, however, I was ready to give up the idea in despair.

As to any evidence I might give, a moment's thought convinced me that this was a reed on which I dared not lean, nor could I put any greater faith in intercession. But escape! thought I.—Escape, as the idea flashed upon my mind—yes—he must—he shall escape!—and in the joy which painted him already safe, I felt as if I could be guilty of any extravagance.

Still when I came to consider over each several method of absconding from on board a man-of-war, particularly when the party so to abscond had his feet fast locked in iron manacles, my dejection almost equalled my previous elevation. Something, however, whispered—"courage and perseverance!" After half-an-hour's anxious pacing of the deck, only one plan however seemed to offer any feasible prospect of success, and that!— My heart grew sick even to think of it—hemmed in with terrible dangers as it was, both to him and me! If either of us failed in the attempt, Will's death was inevitable, mine was not improbable, while the loss of my commission and total ruin in the service were insured.

"As for the latter," said I, "perish such thoughts for ever! It was not with such misgivings that Will Watch was haunted, when he stood sentinel over my breathless body, deterring that inhuman fiend Mackay from flinging me overboard while yet warm, and then preserving my life at the risk of his own!—and shall I be outdone in noble daring by an untutored lad?—possessed of no guide to such acts of devotion, but his own wild generous bosom—I, whose earliest lessons from my cradle were to preserve inviolate the finest principles of gratitude and honour, from one too, whose life was an encomium on his creed.—Never! Let them hack me in pieces and gibbet the remains—let the scoff and the sneer—the calumny and the lie—be loudest when they will—Humanity has a claim before the service, and though I became an officer before I was a man, there is a duty I owe to my own heart which has a claim on me even before my king. There is something which tells me that my soul dictates this feeling. I may be doomed to be unfortunate, but, God bear me witness, I have not knowingly done wrong!"

Without giving myself a moment's time to waver, though I do not now think there was much danger of that, I endeavoured to appear as cool and unperturbed as possible; and walking up to one of the lieutenants—Richardson—I requested that he would just take charge of the deck while I retired below for a few minutes.

Having succeeded in this, I immediately shut myself in my cabin, and praying that I might succeed in the attempt I was about to make, I lighted a candle by means of a match and my cigar flint, and then getting a piece of sealing-wax, and a large card, proceeded to my undertaking; though, at the same time, my hand trembled to that degree, that it almost foiled my purpose.

As officer of the watch, I had, of course, been entrusted with the key of Will's irons; for the manacles on board a ship consist, as you may know, of a series of horse-shoe shaped anklets, traversing a long iron bar, one end of which contains an eye, where the insertion of a padlock effectually secures the offender's feet; the last having previously been encircled by the iron anklets, or rings. The key of this padlock, then, it was, which I now took from my pocket, and modelled, or I should rather say, moulded, as quickly as I could, in sealing wax. For fear of any accident happening to a single impression, I took two separate ones, of each side of the key,—carefully removed the slightest particle of wax from the iron, blew out the taper, locked up the impressions in my desk, and returned on deck, just as the ship's bell was striking twelve o'clock.

The boatswain's pipe—which sent the people below to their dinner—had scarcely sounded, and the various messes were still getting their rations from the cooks, when the captain's galley was seen to shove off from the admiral's ship, and in a few minutes Carrington was alongside.

The first glance at his countenance told me how gloomy was the result of his report to the admiral—it was soon known.—A court-martial was ordered for the next morning, in which he was to figure as prosecutor. As for any hopes of the result proving in Will's favour—there was, indeed, less chance of that than ever.

I must, indeed, be decisive in my movements, thought I, and God send that they may succeed. It is a hard combat between the duty I owe the service, and the duty I owe to Will; but

the former is attended with every safety to myself—and the latter, with the utmost peril. I have already decided on my part, and I will not again torment myself with an idle inquiry.

Captain Carrington having in person interrogated first Watch, and then Kerslake, gave to the latter such a reprimand as a whole life could never suffice to efface. Much to my astonishment, Kerslake had the audacity to declare, that he confined what he termed his "gallantries" to words, and that Fanny's mother had intentionally struck at him. Here I interrupted him, and convinced the captain both by the scutry's evidence and my own, that nothing could be more untrue, and that in short, the affair had occurred exactly as I had already represented it to him. I saw from Kerslake's eye, that I was never to be forgiven—but who would ask the forgiveness of such a villain? I cannot call him by a milder name.

As nothing could, of course, transpire from these inquiries, that at all altered the aspect of the case, the captain considered it useless to remain on board, and therefore ordered his boat to be called away, as soon as the hands should be turned up from dinner. Having been duly relieved from my watch, I now asked leave to go on shore, in order that I might ride across the country to Sir E—— D——'s, at * * ; this gentleman being an intimate friend of Admiral Fluke, and so connected with an influential member of the cabinet, as to ensure a favourable hearing in a case like the present.

The captain granted me the leave I asked, thanked me for exerting myself, and offered me a passage in his galley: the last of which I thankfully accepted—nor did I disclaim his thanks, for I felt how necessary it was, to hide the obligations under which I stood to Will, and the interest which I consequently had in his fate. For this purpose, I even refrained from once going near the prisoner by myself, after having communicated the necessity which compelled the first lieutenant to place him in irons.

I doubt not, poor fellow! he felt this, and might even, in his own mind, have accused me of being no better than friends in general, on whom, so Tasso tells us, we must least expect to lean, when we can least dispense with their support.

I was content, however, that Will should wrong my friendship by his suspicions, rather than I should wrong his cause by

any indiscreet display of interest. Having taken care to replenish my purse with that talismanic metal which smooths the difficulties of every path, I secured in the innermost recesses of my dress the pocket-book containing the impressions of the key, which last had now, as a matter of course, passed into the hands of the officer who relieved me.

As soon as the captain's galley was called away, I descended trembling into the stern-sheets, and sat myself down, where, being soon joined by Don Quixote himself—as we called him—we shoved off. At the landing-place, we parted—Captain Carrington setting off for the colonel's, I, to make preparations for my scheme.

The first thing I did, was to make as favourable a report as possible, to Fanny and her mother, who continued, as you must imagine, in the deepest distress. I then went and hired a good strong horse, whose shoes were none of the newest, and afterwards bought a plain rustic sort of a coat, hat, and trousers, at a little tailor's shop, making him fold them up in a sealed paper parcel. Putting this under my cloak, I marched away to the first tavern, which I found to be chiefly frequented by farmers, and having asked for a bedroom, and thrown my bundle down in a corner, as if of no consequence, locked the door, put the key in my pocket, and ordered a coarse dinner to be got ready on the instant. As soon as my hasty meal was swallowed, I slung my bundle under my cloak, mounted my cob, and at a hard trot made off in the direction of Sir E——D——'s, which, as you may know, is at the distance of some fifteen miles from Deal.

Instead, however, of selecting the nearest road, I preferred one which, by taking a wider sweep towards Canterbury, added at least an additional three miles. As soon as I got a sufficient distance from the little town I had just left, I stopped at an inn on the road side, and managed to learn that my present route would lead through the little village of * *, after another hour's riding. Keeping, therefore, a look out for this hamlet, I no sooner observed it from a neighbouring hill, than I turned aside to the first haystack, slipped off my uniform, and donning my more countryfied garb, buried the former under some loose hay. Remounting my horse, I then made a detour to the right, and entered the village from the north-east, or Canterbury-road, thus making it appear that I had come from towards that city.

My first inquiry was for a blacksmith, to whom having been speedily directed, I now told a long and lamentable story of loose shoes—and bad shoes—and rascally shoes. Horse stumbling at every step, neck much endangered, a wife and three very, very small children, and the mother of them so "ordinary," that I feared, if she were to become a widow to-morrow, she'd never have a chance of being espoused again.

This, as I expected, produced a somewhat chaste and elegant repartee from the modest Vulcan, who bashfully assured me that, if it was horse-shoeing which I wanted, I might esteem myself particularly fortunate. Chance, he assured me, had arrested my progress, in a village which, though he said it, possessed the handiest blacksmith in all Kent, and that was "a bold word, seeing there was ne'er another of the same trade as his in the place."

The blacksmith's spouse, who stood close behind her lord, and was employed, like Queen Dido, in "darning a hole in her stocking O;"—she, too, corroborated this assertion, and I, to prove how completely I believed their united testimony, besought him to employ himself at once, and in the meantime send out for two pints of rum. The smith's eyes glistened, and the rum soon appeared. A moiety I thought it but prudent to bestow upon the regal partner of his state, to regale some of her friends whom I heard talking within his little parlour. The rest remained to stimulate the sooty god to his labours. These, however, were only half finished, and the generosity of his heart well opened, when, with all the art I could compass, I brought in the main cause of my journey, the making the keys, which I pretended I had forgotten to get manufactured at Canterbury, thereby allowing him to believe that it was from this city I had come.

The arguments I might have used I know not. I fear it was but a lame showing altogether; for I felt so confused and unequal to the task I had undertaken, that but little penetration would have sufficed to detect me. The general outline of my design was, however, good. Few men, I knew, could be very acute after swallowing the best part of a pint of rum; to this I trusted, and by this managed to succeed. What with a few doubts, skilfully thrown out, as to his capacity to achieve the task in hand, and the temptation of a price somewhat over his right hire, I contrived to get the posse comitatus of the forge set to work, and with such goodwill and effect that in

less than an hour I had obtained my keys, paid my money, and set off as if towards Deal, but again making a circuit, regained my road to Sir E—— D——'s, and changing my clothes once more, stuffed my late garb into a rabbit's hole. Happen what will, said I, 'twill at least puzzle them to trace the making of these keys, and now for the seat of my friend in my proper uniform !

When I gained my destination, I urged my request, and received an assurance that a very strong letter, on Will's behalf, should be despatched by Sir E—— that night to his friend in town, so that, should the sentence be unfavourable, every intercession might be made in the only quarter where it could avail him. At the same time, very slight hopes indeed were held out to me of the success of such an application. This only the more confirmed my determination to risk all on my former plan ; and remounting my horse, I once more rode for life and death.

Fagged and tired indeed was I, when I got on board, which I did just before eight o'clock. Here I found there was some debate as to the keeping of the night watches ; for Kerslake, being incapable of performing any duties from his arrest, had thus disarranged those of his brother officers. As such a plan would be far from interfering with my views, I offered to keep the first watch myself, being relieved by Richardson for the middle watch, while the first lieutenant, being called at five o'clock, would be all that was necessary for the morning.

This arrangement then was made, and never, never shall I forget the deep, the intense anxiety with which I paced the deck till twelve. Oh, those four hours ! They were most horrible. First, the dread of discovery tormented me ; then came the careful revision of all the steps I had taken to conceal the slightest clue.

As the eventful hour approached, I grew nervous and irritable to a degree ; I fancied I saw people hovering about me in every corner of the deck, wherever there was the least shadow, and where I was very well assured that no one could be. The youngsters of my watch were all sleeping on their posts most dutifully, some in one direction, some in another. Being a cold, clear, frosty night, the stars were shining brilliantly overhead ; while a cutting north-west wind sung loudly through the rigging.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE bell of the flagship striking eight, fell heavily upon my ear, announcing the arrival of midnight, and the expiration of my watch. Rousing up my midshipmen, I sent them down to call their various reliefs, and walked below in person, to know why the sentry's hour-glass was behind those of the squadron.

“Tis but a few minutes, sir,” said the marine, turning his sand, and going forward to sound the hour on the bell, hanging in the galley.

The decisive moment had arrived—no one was at hand—the midshipmen and quarter-master busied on the deck below—the sentinel screened from observation of his post, by the length of the main-deck and the dull glimmering light of the cabin-door lamp—everything was still!—saving the slow breathing of Will Watch, who slept on the hard planks between two of the guns—a shot case for his pillow, and a few coats thrown over his body.

Opening the leaves of the log-board which stood by him, and taking the chalk in my hand, as if going to mark down the direction of the wind, I stooped close to Will's ear, and quickly and effectually awakening him, said—

“Watch, if you are found here tomorrow morning, you are a dead man! Nothing but instant escape can save your life. Pretend to sleep on, till the sentry is relieved; choose your moment; slip overboard and swim for the shore. Here are means for your wants, and keys for your padlock; if you compromise me, we are both lost!”

With these words, I slipped a purse of fifty guineas into his bosom, and the keys into his hand, together with a small flask of excellent brandy. The last bell sounded; snatching up the log-board, I began writing down the wind, asked some unimportant questions of the sentry, with as firm a voice as I could command, and then, shutting the board before the man's face, returned on deck.

I now, through the quarter-deck skylight, heard the corporal go aft to the cabin-door with the relief-guard. There, among other instructions given, I distinguished the order to keep a strict ward over the person of Will Watch. Fancy my dreadful agitation during that pause! It passed. The corporal and

the marine relieved, returned below, and Richardson made his appearance to take the deck.

Thinking that extreme sleepiness would best conceal my excited state, I pretended to be fagged to death with my ride, and mumbling out the various orders, as if as sleepy as the man I addressed, I slipped below; pausing by the way on the quarter-deck-ladder, and saying, "Oh, by-the-by!—the prisoner on the main deck, Richardson, is under your charge—sentry—Is your prisoner all safe?"

"All safe, sir."

"All right, Richardson, good night!"

"Good night, bo'!" returned my brother officer, and in a few minutes I was lying down in my cabin—but not to sleep—No! Faint and ill and weary—and racked with a thousand agonies, death seemed far nearer to me than her calm and welcome sister!

One bell struck—two bells struck, and there I remained, turning from side to side, one moment in a state of burning fever, and in the next bedewed with a cold and fearful moisture; praying and hoping that the escape might be effected, and sometimes wondering whether it had not already been put into execution.

Suddenly the captain's bell rang—the sentry entered the cabin.—"Who is that on guard now?" I heard Carrington demand.

"Solebay, sir," replied the marine, giving his name.

"Oh! Solebay! Then go below, Solebay, wake up my steward, and ask him for the keys of the beaufet. I want some brandy—and ask him also where he keeps those drops I take for the headache."

"Ay, ay, sir!" replied Solebay, shutting the door, and coming slowly down on the lower deck.

Now, Will—now—now is the time—now or never! thought I, starting to my feet, and straining every faculty to catch the slightest sound until I thought I should have dropped upon the deck.

Was it?—could it be possible?—did I hear a slight grating noise? Surely it must be so. A tinkle! A rustling. A slight pause and then—was it a plunge?—or but the very faintest sound which my fancy coined into one?—

One minute—two—three—four—five—six—eight—ten—the sentry had not returned! Again the cabin bell rang. He hurried up, bumping under the pendant hammock of some poor

tired sleeper, and without noticing the anathema, hurried up the ladder into the presence of his superior—no discovery!

Had it been Will, or had my fancy cheated me? The cabin door closed. Now, now. If he has fled, all will be discovered! The running feet of the soldier again descended to the steward's berth, and then after a shorter pause returned to his superior.

The wants of the captain were not yet supplied. Another quarter of an hour elapsed. "Let me be called at seven," said Carrington—the door finally closed, and the sentinel resumed his sullen walk. Then he has not escaped, and the fairest opportunity is lost to Will for ever!

Objects seemed to fade and whirl around me—a sickly thirst oppressed me, I felt myself gradually falling, uncovered as I was, along the deck. By a sudden transition, I stood in the midst of the court-martial, while the president, after reading the order for the trial, summoned the provost marshal in a loud tone to produce "Will Watch—Will Watch!—Will Watch!"

Did I hear aright? was I asleep and dreaming? or awake and lying on the cold deck of my berth, while the sentry at the cabin-door was shouting the name of his prisoner? Surely I could not be wrong! No answer was returned. The thunder-stricken soldier rushed upon deck to Richardson—"Will Watch, sir, has escaped!" I heard him say in accents of the greatest alarm.

Ten thousand joys! and ten thousand thanks! was it indeed true? It was indeed! There was a shouting of voices, and hurrying of feet—the captain's door was unceremoniously thrust open and his slumbers quickly disturbed, but I could distinguish no words but these, "Will Watch has escaped!"

Thousands could not have afforded me one-half the joy those words conveyed! Flinging myself on my bed in an extasy of gratitude and happiness, I gave way to an exultation as complete as my distress had but a few moments since been extreme—Will was again safe and free!

Nearly a quarter of an hour had now elapsed since the alarm had first been given, and the tumult which it had then excited, was now, if possible, redoubled. The first lieutenant had been called, and having hastily dressed himself, hurried upon deck. Muskets were fired—blue lights were burnt, and boats called away.

At one time I debated with myself whether it would not be most prudent for me to make my appearance on deck also. On

reconsidering the matter, however, I thought it would not; and that my presence would look marked, as none of the other gun-room officers—the first lieutenant excepted—had thought fit to bestir themselves. Besides, after all my fagging, when it was known that I had ridden at least forty miles, and then kept the first watch, it would not appear very much out of the way that I should sleep too soundly to hear even the uproar of the prisoner's escape.

I remained, then, perfectly quiet till everything had subsided but the shouting of the first lieutenant from the deck to the boats, pointing out in what directions they were to pull in search of the flown captive: even this, however, soon began to lessen, though it still left me anxious beyond measure, as you may imagine, to learn whether Will had so managed as to leave behind no trace of the hand that set him free. The bare thought of this did indeed make me shudder—but the weariness resulting from my toils, and joy at the success of my scheme as far as it had gone, soon proved too powerful for even this source of apprehension; and before long I was sleeping soundly.

Awaking with a start when my servant came to call me as usual, at seven on the ensuing morning, the remembrance of the preceding night flashed back upon my mind—bringing with it a dreadful sense of weight and apprehension. My first question was as to the cause of disturbance in the middle watch, and this I followed up with all the affectation of surprise which I could assume. I soon learnt that little was ascertained which related to the mode of his escape, and that there was no danger in my presenting myself on deck, and renewing my inquiries through more authentic channels. This then I speedily did, and was rejoiced to find that as little was known on the subject as I could possibly desire.

Will's jacket, hat, and shoes, were left on the gun, beside which his irons were still lying. The padlock on the bar was found—much to every one's surprise—locked and entire, but the anklets, which had held the prisoner's feet, were gone. From this it was conjectured that he had obtained a file, and managed to cut them away. The sentry had not, it would seem, missed the fugitive until four bells, and as no doubt was entertained that he had slipped overboard while the marine was employed by the captain, he had thus had nearly an hour's start of his pursuers.

The latter, it is true, were none of them very anxious for success in their search, for the strongest feeling had very naturally gone abroad in his favour throughout the ship.

At first Captain Carrington appeared much annoyed, but I believe it was more because his name was mixed up in the matter than for any other reason—since he afterwards expressed his satisfaction, not only that circumstances should have favoured an innocent and injured man in his escape from a disgusting death, but that it should have so fallen out as to exempt any one from blame. Still, however, both the sentry and myself were held in no slight uneasiness for some hours, by the poor fellow being ordered into the report for a flogging.

On hearing this, I took the earliest opportunity of speaking to the first lieutenant, who said he concurred in my opinion, and that “as soon as the skipper cooled down a little,” he would intercede.

Still better, though, it fell out, that there was no need of this. At eight o’clock, Captain Carrington repaired on board the flag-ship, to report the mishap of the preceding night, and to ask what course had better be pursued towards Kerslake. He had no sooner done this, than the admiral, who was a humane and sensible officer, rose up, and taking Carrington’s hand, said, “So the prisoner has escaped, has he? Can’t be helped, then; and between ourselves, I do not regret it, Captain Carrington. Your ship must have lost an able hand, one way or another, and I had rather it should be by his running, than his hanging. I will rescind the order for court-martial at once, and by all accounts, we have had an escape as well as him.”

“As for this fellow Kerslake, we must despatch him adrift at once. The service, though, may as well be spared the disgrace of doing it by court-martial. Such a proceeding would excite discussion among us, and the speediest method of settling the matter, will be for you, Captain Carrington, to tell him from me, that he must either write me a letter, demanding his discharge within half an hour, or stand the result of a court-martial. If he takes my advice, he will adopt any course but the latter. So now that we have got rid of this matter, you may prepare for the squadron’s sailing to-morrow,—it was only this disagreeable business which detained us—now that the wind’s fair.”

You may readily suppose that Captain Carrington was not

sorry to find the matter taken so easily, in a quarter where he had looked for a reprimand ; and returning on board, in full possession of his good humour, first cautioned the sentry to use greater vigilance in future over such prisoners as might come under his charge, and then, of his own accord, ordered that his name might be withdrawn from the report.

His next step was to summon the gun-room officers, before whom he repeated to Kerslake the jobation he had before given this offender ; repeating to him in conclusion the message with which he had been charged by the admiral. The appearance of Kerslake on hearing this, was at once pitiable and revolting.

He scarcely answered Captain Carrington a word, but with deadly paleness demanded a few minutes' consideration : then turning to me, requested that I would accompany him below to his cabin. Not a little surprised at this proceeding, I bowed an assent, and desired him to lead the way. Captain Carrington desired the gun-room officers to be seated, and telling Kerslake he should await his answer, we left the cabin.

No sooner were Kerslake and myself alone, than he demanded of me, whether, in the case of a court-martial, I still intended to adhere to the evidence which I had already given to the captain.

“ Kerslake,” said I, “ this is futile. You must know, too well, that I shall deliver the exact truth, and that by this you will infallibly fall. Were it not so—the sentry’s evidence would alone condemn you. What, then, do you expect from me, that you demand this extraordinary interview ? ”

“ Nothing ! ”—dashing his hand down on the table before him, while the word seemed forced from him, with a low hissing sound—“ Nothing ! but the hearing of my unalienable and unfailing purposes of hatred and revenge. You have wounded me in the tenderest points of person—happiness and reputation—and I will never cease from my efforts, until I have wreaked a tenfold vengeance on you and your minion,—though every hour I have to live should be devoted to gaining the opportunity ! ”

For a moment I meditated a reply ; but I felt this to be the language of a worthless and a fallen man. With a smile of scorn, I turned my back upon the culprit, and walked away to the main deck. I had scarcely taken a dozen steps when I

heard him quickly following me, and we entered the presence of the assembled officers almost at the same time.

“Your resolution, sir?” demanded Captain Carrington.

Kerslake muttered some indistinct sentence, and bowed his head.

“Scotsworth,” resumed the captain, turning to his clerk, “is that letter ready?”

“Here it is, sir.”

“Hand it to Mr. Kerslake. If that, sir, suits your views, you have only to sign it, and this affair is settled. You can then remove your furniture and wardrobe to the shore—I will at once forward this to the admiral, and you shall receive your discharge, in due form, within an hour.”

Kerslake took the pen from the clerk in silence—affixed his name—retired from the cabin—and, placing his hat on his head, walked on deck. He then jumped into a shore-boat without the utterance of a word, and had himself rowed rapidly away from the scene of his disgrace.

The captain was as good as his word, and before the evening fell, the vacancy was supplied by the joining of a Charles John Curtis, from the admiral, on promotion.

For a few hours, it is true, we thought of him who had thus suddenly left us: but it was the reflection bestowed on one unworthy to occupy a longer remembrance.

“Thank heaven,” said I, as I turned in, “the dreadful scene of last night is not to come over again! And yet, was not all my pain—my anxiety—almost repaid by the overflowing gratitude of Will’s mother, and his own dear Fanny, when I went to see them to-day, with the joyful news that our friend was no longer bound in misery and iron?”

As I had supposed, he had already taken care to apprise them of the fact, and say that he was in safe hiding, after his perilous swim, and rejoiced I was to hear it, as well as he must have known I should be. Were they aware, I wonder, of the participation I had in the escape? I should hope, and indeed I think, not. And yet could anything be more rapturous?—surely nothing more bewitching, than the artless way in which Fanny wept and thanked me!

By noon next day, we were speeding down the channel with a beautiful breeze from the north-east, with scarcely a saddened heart on board—save one!

As the Land's End gradually faded in the blue waste behind us, the mind reluctantly resigned the pensive thoughts of home, and seemed to turn itself, with the eye, to the new path of anxiety and adventure that opened out before us.

Often during the first night-watches which I kept at sea, when the whole responsibility of my charge occurred to me, would I wrap myself in my shaggy coat, and say, "Charles Arran, you are at length a lieutenant. The path lies fairly at your feet. The epoch on which you used to expatiate so frequently—so eagerly—with Miles—has arrived." "True, true," a solemn spirit whispered from within; "alas, too true—but where now is my friend?"

Too quickly the illusion was dispelled. I ceased to gaze on the bright vault above me—on the moon-beam, silvering the rude waves of the Biscayan waters beneath me, and resuming my walk, put some unimportant question to the helmsman, and acknowledged that happiness was as far before me as ever. Strange that men should never tire in the pursuit of an unattainable object!

The gilding of my solitary epaulette had not begun to dim, before my thoughts, forsaking their former channel, only looked forward to the attainment of its fellow. Even so pleasant a contemplation as this, however, soon grew wearisome, and in order to divert my mind, I had recourse to my journal. Though I had ceased to keep this up during my stay on shore, and indeed since the morning of my quitting the Rutland, I had, nevertheless, jotted down in my own peculiar hieroglyphics, every occurrence worthy of notice afloat; together with the right dates, and these I now sat down to arrange; since I knew not at what moment I might want to recur to them:—sure, at least, that my dear old friend, the admiral, would not fail to be pleased with this deference to his opinion, that "no young officer should pass over the events of the war in a heedless or unreflective manner."

"How goes the war? - On returning to the 'Folly,' learnt that my good Lord Bridport had not been the most liberal in his dispatches, though the sensible people of England were pleased to take his word for having done a very gallant thing—thanks of parliament, and so forth; and even these invidiously confined to only a portion of the flag-officers present. Certainly it was strange in that affair, to see an admiral of such

undisputed gallantry and courage, let slip so glorious an opportunity from mere want of youthful energy.

“ Scarcely had we got home, and that humblest of individuals, Charles Arran, brought-to snugly at the ‘Folly,’ when there came on, in the beginning of November, one of the most dreadful tempests I ever witnessed. That may not be much, you will say—right—but even the good old admiral, seasoned as he has been, in West Indian tornadoes, even he entertains his doubts as to which might be the worst. Natural consequences, of course, ensued: wrecks, and loss of life, to a frightful extent, in all directions.

How happy, sir, we sailors be,
That live at sea—et cætera.

“ Admiral Christian had sailed with troops and transports for Barbadoes, but a few days before. Squadron driven back with great loss and damage, and as for the convoy—where were they? When the sea gives up its dead we shall know, but not, alas! till then. Tempestuous weather continued for the next two months, when the gods of the winds, from the soreness of their cheeks, found it necessary to conclude a peace. Not so the Directory. Success after success, seems to attend all they take in hand, much to the delight of several and sundry seditious mobs and meetings, clubs and companies, and the sore distress of William Pitt.

“ The result of this has been the rise of republican principles in Holland, the Stadholder having been obliged to fly to England for safety, leaving his dominions to the tender mercy of the French; with whom they now figure in close alliance as the Batavian Republic. Thus, then, we have been compelled to declare hostilities with Holland, five of whose men-of-war, together with some seventy sail of convoy, we found it necessary to seize and hold *in commendam*, as it were.

“ This was done at Plymouth, in January of this year, while, as another topic of consolation, our beloved and subsidized ally, Prussia, left us in the lurch in April last, and joined the enemy—actually as if with the intention of confirming the views of Charley Fox, as put forth in his most splendid speech, delivered about a week before.—But Fox must have had intelligence of what was going on, before he brought forward his motion for inquiry.

“ Not very liberal to the navy, Master Charley, but what matters that to me?—‘ We know you lawyers can,’ and so on, —the same with statesmen.—He did not mean to be illiberal, though Pitt artfully put this construction on his words.—Well, well, this certainly has not been a bright year with the blue warriors of the sea—if we except the masterly retreat of Cornwallis, which I have before mentioned, as having heard, off Isle Groix.—Afterwards proved those accounts to be quite correct. Even in the Mediterranean, that splendid field for glory—little or nothing has been done—it would not have been so if my old commander, Lord Hood, had remained there.—After the taking of Corsica, however, as mentioned in the letter of my poor friend, Miles, his lordship came home to represent the destitute state of the fleet he had left in those seas, and urge, by every argument in his power, that Government should at once send out those necessary succours, for which he had written so often and in vain. This I had from the admiral, whose sources of information are generally very correct. Such treatment is too bad—we are monarchs at sea, but mice on shore. Find out their mistake some day.

“ The departure of Lord Hood from the Mediterranean, left Vice-Admiral Hotham commander-in-chief, and he, after losing a line-of-battle ship—the Berwick, through the carelessness of her officers, became engaged with the French off Genoa, on two successive days, and succeeded in capturing two of the enemy’s line—the Ca-Ira and Censeur—a result not disrespectable by an inferior force, but totally unworthy of an English fleet—Miles’s ‘ Captain Brigadier’ Nelson, said to have been very anxious that his commander-in-chief should follow up the affair well—but Hotham, it is said, belongs to the slow-coach family—*festina lente*. As a set-off to this, the Illustrious, one of Hotham’s line, was lost near Leghorn, and the crew with difficulty saved; owing to the gale which came on after the action, and the damaged state of the ship.

“ Soon after this, the French seamen at Toulon, by way of a change, tried their hands at a little mutiny.—Pleasant occasionally—though not safe—and the Frenchmen vowed to expiate their past crimes by their future valour, ventured out to sea, very nearly caught a tartar in the person of little Nelson, off San Fiorenzo, and finally, in another partial engagement off the islands of the Hicres, lost one of their line, the Aleide.

“ This vessel, however, blew up before we could take posse-

sion of her, owing to combustibles of an unusual nature being used on board. It won't do, Johnny Crapeau!—it won't do!—nothing like fair fighting, take my word for it—and if you want to win the day, you must get more bottom—more “pluck”—that's John Bull's forte. You've spirit enough for anything, but endurance is the thing, and so we found, when shortly after this last brush, we had to endure the recapture of the *Censeur*, together with some thirty sail of the Levantine convoy, by M. Richery, from Toulon, from which port, also, Ganteaume managed to make his escape, with a small squadron; aye, and bring it back in safety, it is said, but a short time since; after doing much damage to our trade in the Archipelago, and this, despite of the squadrons of Admiral Mann, and Captain Trowbridge.

“In November, it seems, Hotham resigned his command to Sir Hyde Parker, but the latter had scarcely enjoyed it three weeks, when all his newborn greatness was quenched by the arrival of a new commander-in-chief from England, in the person of Sir John Jervis—said to be a rigid, but energetic officer; and energy in a commander is what Demosthenes affirms action to be in an orator. Sir John it was who distinguished himself in the West Indies, last year, at the capture of Martinique and St. Lucie. One sad trick, it seems, he possesses—the use of exceedingly bad language occasionally; but if junior officers put up with this, they are fools for their pains.—Sir John, by the bye, lost his flag-ship, the *Boyne*, at Spithead, by fire, while I was at the ‘Folly,’ and a pretty blaze she made of it—his flag-captain then was Captain George Grey—a smart and gallant officer—I dare say he still continues with him.—Admiral Fluke hints, that Sir John Jervis supersedes Hotham, in consequence of some representations made to the Admiralty by the Duke of Clarence.

“Such, as far as regards the grand movements of the war, have been the results of this year; but what, after all, do these little nothings make?—Who will remember them to-morrow?—Hotham has had as good an opportunity as Howe, but no first of June will be mentioned with his name. Courage is good in a subordinate, but tame in a commander-in-chief; for the last it must be energy and daring—tempered by that prudence which is the result of knowledge.—Well, well, so much the better for us: your fleets must be destroyed, monsieur—you know they must—and Johnny Jervis is the man for you.

“Poorly, however, as we have performed in the more sublime parts of the glorious drama, we have, nevertheless, had some very good frigate actions this year. Sir Rich. Strachan’s squadron in particular has done well, nor has Sir Borlase Warren’s played its part very badly—all excepting the unhappy Quiberon affair. But above all, the splendid action of the *Blanche* and *Pique*, and the gallant name of Faulknor, who commanded the former frigate, must prevent the year 1795 from ever being forgotten by an Englishman.

“Poor Faulknor!—though he did not live see the *Pique*’s colours hauled down, his was a most gallant death—and for so young a man!—This action was received and rewarded by his king and country as they should have been. But, perhaps, amid all the actions of the war, we shall not find one more gallant than that of the *Rose cutter*, of eight guns, and thirteen men, commanded by a man I once knew—a lieutenant—William Walker. He had the hardihood to attack, near Leghorn, three privateers—each one more than a match for himself. One he sunk—one he captured—the third escaped. Their united crews made a hundred and fifty men: even the one he took was manned with upwards of thirty.—Walker, on the other hand, was encumbered by female passengers, and the responsibility of a large sum in specie, and yet Walker was never promoted, nor even his gallantry mentioned in Hotham’s public letters—too bad!—Well, well, Hotham’s made a peer, so we may fairly presume *he’s* not satisfied—for, too frequently, the less a man merits, the more he wants.—And yet Hotham’s character, in private, was very good and amiable, I believe.—I know many smart officers who present the reverse. In the West Indies, little, I believe, has been going on, for the French have found it difficult to reinforce their amiable officer, Victor Hugues. His ravages have, therefore, had a less extensive range than his philanthropic breast could desire: being chiefly confined to spreading insurrection and revolt, and their accompaniments, murder and devastation, among the islands. The action of the *Blanche*, it is true, occurred off Guadaloupe.

“As a result, and no bad one, of the establishment of a republic in Holland, the Cape of Good Hope has fallen into our hands. This colony surrendered in the beginning of September, to our combined forces, under my old commander, Sir George Keith Elphinstone, and General Sir Alured Clarke.

In the East Indies, also, little has been doing, since very little fighting sufficed to put into our keeping every colony and settlement that once belonged to the Dutch.—Here, then, good night to ninety-five. So may old England's flag still wave victorious wherever it appears!"

CHAPTER XX.

BUSIED with many thoughts on the strange vicissitudes and juxtapositions of Fortune, so visible at every turn of a great city, I had entered the Park, and was crossing one of the public drives, when an exclamation of astonishment from a passing carriage caused me to look np. You may judge of my wonderment, when I beheld the vehicle stopped, as suddenly as its rapid speed permitted, and turned about to where I stood. A lady, young and beautiful, alone occupied the chariot in question. It must be some mistake! I looked, and ooked again. Could it be possible? It was Cornelia! For he first minute I stood confounded, but in the next I had opened the door unasked, and, leaping in, pressed her hand to my lips.

Fortunately for us, we were in a path but little frequented, and no one beheld this strange meeting between two lovers—too deeply wrapt in each other to attend to the strictest proprieties of time and place. The footman, to be sure, demanded in some astonishment, "where we would drive;" but as the course they had been pursuing was towards Kensington, I directed them to continue in it; and turning towards Cornelia, once more sated my eyes on lips that still trembled too much to speak. But raptures, however intense, abate like humbler feelings; the first joyous greetings having passed, I demanded if she had received my note; adding playfully, "It is well, indeed, I did not rely on your prompt accession to its request, or I should not have found you at home on my calling."

"Note!" said Cornelia, in astonishment, "I have received none! Through what channel did you send it?"

"Why, choosing the most direct and straightforward course, I enclosed it to your mother."

"Can it be possible?" exclaimed the poor girl; and bury-

ing her face in her handkerchief, she gave way to emotion as strange as it appeared uncontrollable. I immediately perceived that there was some latent cause of grief, at the source of which I determined to arrive ; but judging it most prudent to let this burst have way, I waited for a calmer moment, and, in the meanwhile, observed, with sorrow, the attenuated appearance which now marked a form once as full and rounded as a young antelope's.

In a few minutes the conversation was resumed by Cornelia, who assured me, that she had only come out that day for an airing, at the special desire of her mother ; who evidently, from this, had detained my note, and used her best endeavours to prevent my seeing one whom, I conceived, I had every right to meet, when and where I pleased. Resolved to fathom this affair to the bottom, I proceeded, by queries as gentle as I could make them ; and with many sighs and tears, and some few conjectures, by way of connecting links, I became acquainted with a series of intrigues, which filled me with rage, apprehension, and disgust.

It seems that immediately after the marriage of madame with Lord * *, the change in the prospects of the new countess produced a corresponding elevation in her ideas. This, however, I have already hinted, and have told you that the first opportunity was also seized to detach Cornelia from the admiral, and bring her from the 'Folly' up to town.

Here, as her mother had conjectured, the striking beauty of ~~the~~ young Spaniard at once elevated her into all the splendid caresses of that brief reign, so invariably filled and suffered in succession by each lovely *debutante* in these circles.

If my offers were the instant results, as matters of course, among these I found, with a strange mixture of pride and sorrow, were some far surpassing, in point of worldly aggrandizement, any humble views that I could boast ; and these, notwithstanding the previous lectures and subsequent rages of my lady, were refused.

The continual disputes to which these circumstances gave rise became at last, however, so sad, that Cornelia refused to enter any longer into society, on the plea of ill health ; and, notwithstanding every persuasion used by her mother, to this determination she had adhered with all the immovable firmness which distinguished her character. Recourse was now had to

redoubled gaieties at home ; and the result was, to render her almost a close prisoner in her own suite of rooms.

Ill health speedily followed in reality. A low hectic fever settled on her, accompanied with palpitation of the heart and frequent fainting, of which, during that brief morning's drive, I had evidence no less than four successive times. You may fancy the torrent of wrath and indignation which boiled along my veins, when I heard and witnessed the sufferings to which the persecutions of an ambitious *intriguant* had reduced the being I most loved on earth ! But the climax of her sad story had not yet arrived.

Notwithstanding the sudden disappearance of the fair enchantress from the empire of the brilliant, where so many were anxious to banish the remembrance of her superior charms, some few there were, more steady than the fickle crowd in their devotion—more deeply wounded than the general herd, who yet tracked to her retreat the sad and unaspiring object of their admiration, the drooping and reluctant cause of their distress.

Though no longer to be hunted down at the drawing-room or the ball, she was still to be found at the table of her father-in-law ; and thither the countess took especial care to invite all whose suits she more particularly favoured ; all whom poor Cornelia most anxiously sought to avoid. Among these last, one was especially importunate, especially stricken in years, especially rich in rank and fortune, and consequently especially backed by her ladyship. No rebuff seemed to dishearten him, no generous confidence to dissuade ; for, after two refusals, he still remained to distress, with his disgusting solicitations, one who confessed her inability to yield him her heart, even though he should obtain her hand.

After remaining firm, however, to all that the rage of her parent could threaten, her malice or intrigue effect, a still more cruel and affecting torture was brought to bear upon her feelings.

Early one Sunday morning, a fortnight previous, and just as the sun was stealing into Cornelia's room, she found herself aroused by her mother. Her ladyship, attired in the rich dress in which she had that instant come from a crowded rout, staggered towards a chair near the foot of the bed. In endeavouring to place her taper upon an adjacent table, the

violent trembling of her hand caused her to spill the melted wax upon her fingers ; and, letting fall the light, from the sudden pain, it instantly set fire to some of the lace trimming on her robe ; and, but for *Cornelia's* presence of mind, her parent would have been seriously, if not fatally, burnt.

“ You may imagine,” said *Cornelia*, as she related this scene, “ how fearfully excited my mother must have been, when, timid as she is, even the dangers she had escaped made no impression on her ; for when, having smothered the flames with a large shawl, I attempted to ring for assistance and a light, she exclaimed that she wanted neither, and commanded me to desist in a tone of rage and frenzy, that at first led me to doubt whether sudden fright had not reduced her to insanity. Dreadful as that would have been, I was no less dreadfully undeceived.”

Cornelia now proceeded to tell me, that she seated herself opposite to her mother, in mute and agonized apprehension ; when the latter, in a tone of more than even her usual vehemence, insisted on her daughter's instantly accepting, as her husband, the relentless suitor to whom I have already alluded. This the poor victim most firmly but temperately refused to do, alleging that she considered herself pledged in another quarter ; and, though they were fast hurrying her to her grave, she would unflinchingly adhere to the sentiments in which she had been brought up, and which taught her to esteem the worst of deaths as preferable to dishonourable conduct.

Her ladyship, it would seem, now literally raved,—she spurned the chair from beneath her—sprung to her feet—paced up and down the room like an infuriated tigress—beat her forehead with her hands—heaped the most horrid and awful imprecations upon the innocent child she had so inhumanely treated, and, finally, rending from her neck and shoulders the lace that decked them, and dashing to the ground the splendid gew-gaws with which her person was adorned, she flung herself at her daughter's feet ; clasped her knees, and, bursting into a paroxysm of tears, declared in the most incoherent manner, that she was eternally ruined, infamous, and dishonoured, unless *Cornelia* consented to the marriage she had named.

The poor girl, terrified and alarmed beyond expression, could not even demand the cause of all this anticipated disgrace. Alas ! the question was unnecessary. The countess, with the

hysteric sob of one in the last gasp of guilt and remorse, pronounced the fatal words—"gaming, the love of gaming, *Cornelia*, has undone us both!"

In a few seconds the mother's shame was, we may hope, all revealed. Since her "fortunate marriage," she had resumed the indulgence of a passion always strong within her, and in that short lapse of time had lost the monstrous, the almost incredible sum of one hundred and thirty-seven thousand pounds. A heavy part of this she had paid away in hard cash. The wreck of her first husband's Franco-Spanish property, that should have remained so sacred for her daughter, went first. To recover this, she plunged still deeper in the fatal quicksand! Twelve thousand pounds, which the fondness of an old and doting bridegroom had given her to pay numerous debts, contracted at the time of their wedding, next followed. Every farthing that she could spare from her pin-money, with any other small sum she could extort from her husband's generosity, or subtract from his vigilance, together with the sale of all her own jewels, and the spoliation of those belonging to her husband—gems which had come down in his family, some of them for two hundred years, quickly succeeded; but debts, alarming and extensive debts of honour, soon followed, and completed her entanglements: these were, of course, speedily buzzed through their own immediate circles, leaving the most interested person, Lord **, the only individual uninformed.

The wily candidate for *Cornelia*'s hand now fancied that his prey was secure.—Wealth to him was of no moment beyond its power of procuring him the gratification of his desires; and the more unattainable these appeared to be, the most necessary did they become to the pampered appetite of obstinate senility. Forty-five thousand pounds were speedily placed at the disposal of her ladyship, on terms sufficiently well understood between them, with a promise of an additional sixty on the morning of his marriage with her child; to say nothing of such various aids, as her dutiful son-in-law might be thereafter able to offer her.

Well might the hoary wretch feel undisturbed at the refusals that met his advances—well might the voice of honour and of confidence be lost on one deaf to all but the whisperings of avarice—the promptings of desire!

Having yelled forth, rather than narrated, this hideous tale,

the countess gave Cornelia to understand, that in a mad attempt to recover herself, she had that morning risen from the card-table the loser of no less an amount than thirteen thousand pounds, and that unless Cornelia would show to the authoress of her being the commiseration she implored, she would take refuge from her present and impending anguish in immediate suicide; thus crowning a life of folly and of crime against mankind, with a signal act of rebellion against God!

The only reward that this most desperately selfish woman held out to her daughter for such a dreadful sacrifice, was a promise, to be given on her marriage, of a total abstinence from the mean, the despicable crime, that had already covered her with infamy, and was to steep the future existence of her guiltless offspring in wretchedness and despair.

Panic-stricken at the abyss thus suddenly disclosed beneath her feet, Cornelia knew not what to say, nor where to fly for advice. Without a single friend but him for whom she was undergoing so much anguish, and who was now a lonely wanderer upon the deep, she could only shudder at the fate that had overtaken her, and give herself up for lost!

In the meanwhile there remained her mother kneeling in tears at her feet, alternately beseeching and denouncing, with all the horror of repentant desperation, and all the fury of the maniac.

Before Cornelia, however, would even promise to consider the matter, she extorted from the countess a solemn promise, that never again would she play for a single stake, however slight; and on this condition, the unhappy girl promised to consider the subject of her being "sold to slavery," as she herself termed it, with the tears streaming from her eyes.

Alas! it was indeed no better!—Never in the whole course of my existence had I heard or met with anything that I could deem more deliberately atrocious—I thought the passion that swelled in my throat as I leaned back, must fairly have choked me. Even these revolting terms had not been produced without the greatest obloquy and reproach.—The very longest term of which the countess would hear, was a month, and that had half expired, while Cornelia, not knowing whom to consult, or how to act, had folded up the horrid secret in her breast, there to feed upon her young life's blood, until it had reduced her to the fragile being I now clasped in my arms—so deplorably

wasted with care, that her bosom seemed scarcely to contain the heart so violently throbbing against my own.

By turns Cornelia wept and dried her tears—now filial duty triumphed, and now love!—till, overcome with the sad struggle, she confessed herself stupefied and bewildered by the importance of the decision she had to make, and the conflicting interests that compelled her to it. At length, flinging herself upon my honour, and the true affection which I bore to her, she besought me to counsel her to the best of my ability; and that as no one could be so proper to advise her as he on whom she had once thought to repose all her cares and affections through life, she declared her unalterable intention of abiding by any resolution to which I might arrive, and fulfilling to the uttermost any line of conduct which I might point out—however revolting or painful it might be.

Having come to this conclusion, she soon grew more calm, and, though trembling at the responsibility which it placed on me, I could not but feel some consolation in the conviction that she would implicitly adhere to the words she had uttered; for in this respect, her conduct to the very last displayed all the virtuous spirit of the true Castilian. It was now growing very late, and high time that Cornelia should return to dinner; I therefore got out, and ordered the coachman to drive home, having previously given five guineas to the fellows with three-cornered hats and gold-headed canes. In another instant the carriage drove off, leaving me alone, and not far from Kensington.

The original motive that had brought me to the Park had been entirely forgotten in the emotions excited by all I had since heard. Sitting down on the nearest bench, I endeavoured to come to some conclusion as to the advice which I ought to offer. Night, however, closed in around me before I could come to anything definite. On the succeeding day, at the same hour and spot, I was again to meet Cornelia, and, if I had determined on the plan she was to pursue, was there to communicate it. A mass of images swept onward through my thoughts, but for my life I was utterly unable to combine them into any shape that reason might approve. Rising up, therefore, sufficiently fatigued and ill, I pursued my way to the nearest coach-stand, and could not forbear reflecting, as I walked sorrowfully along, how different was this sad interview from the one which I had so fondly anticipated.

On alighting at the hotel where I was staying, the blaze of light attendant on a grand dinner-party recalled me to some recollection of this vale of tears—this happy spot!—and for the first time, I now remembered that I was to have dined with the duke. On inquiring the hour, however, I was informed that it only wanted a few minutes of ten, and therefore went off at once to a sleepless bed—not sorry, if the truth be confessed, that accident had thus returned to “my fair cousin” that inattention which I thought he had shown to me.

“No!” I exclaimed, after tossing to and fro, throughout that miserable night, “the innocent shall not suffer for the guilty!—If either Cornelia or her mother must fall a victim to this dilemma, let the sacrifice be made of her whose vices have created the occasion. Did the decision rest any longer with Cornelia, filial duty might suggest that her happiness should expiate the offences of her mother; but when a third party becomes the judge, a widely different sentence is demanded, for the guiding principle has been entirely changed. Her duty was to decide between parent and child—but mine between two parties of equal right. The one innocent, the other guilty—I cannot hesitate! the latter must bear the penalty to be paid—Did I think otherwise, I should be guilty of the grossest injustice—My resolution is taken—Cornelia shall not be sold!—Consigned to such a fate by her own voice, it would have been devotion, but by another’s it becomes destruction. Never will I consent to it, and this day I will tell her so!”

That day, how wearily it passed!—a short and feverish slumber succeeded my determination, and I hurriedly arose to breakfast. That over, I proceeded to make my apology to my cousin for my unintentional neglect of the preceding evening;—I sat but a short time, and hastened off to the Park, though it wanted hours of the appointed time.

The moment named at length drew near; carriage after carriage rolled by, leaving me in a suspense not much to be envied. One at last appeared; there were the three knaves behind; the dark chocolate panel and the well-known arms. It contained only one lady—all right at last, thought I—it halted—could it be the same carriage? Its occupant was certainly not Cornelia. I hesitated whether to advance, but, beholding

a note in the lady's hand, I became reassured: advanced—received it—made my bow, and the carriage rolled on.

The billet was from Cornelia, to inform me that our meeting of the previous day was suspected, and that, in order to allay the suspicion, I had better call at her father's, as if with the intention of seeing her, immediately on the receipt of her note. She then went on to say, that I should find myself denied admittance, and that I was to feign some anger at the circumstance; that she had been kept at home that day by the sudden but passing illness of her mother; and that in this dilemma she had been obliged to take into her confidence the French servant who would deliver her note to me; and finally, that she hoped to see me on the same spot and hour on the succeeding day.

Though sufficiently disappointed at such an event, the best thing that I could do was to obey my instructions, which I accordingly did, by repairing to my lady's residence. I was there told, that "the family was out of town."

"You impudent varlet!" said I, "do you take me for such an ignorant blockhead, as not to be able to read the newspaper? If you must tell a falsehood, sirrah, and her ladyship will have it so, in truth's name do ask your mistress to frame a more probable one;" and I flung my card in his face, and walked away in a mood approaching, I fear, much nearer to real anger than mock. The last word suggested to my idea a basin of mock-turtle; and thinking that as I had had no dinner yesterday, I would have some to-day, I repaired forthwith to my cousin's, and afterwards we went down together to the House of Lords; but as nothing of any moment was going on in that dignified assembly, we walked up-stairs to the more animated, though less polished, House of Commons, and there under the gallery witnessed a warm debate between those ever-memorable rivals of the day. Alas! in the beautiful words of Burke, "they too have passed away, and set for ever." I was not allowed to hear even this, however, to the end, for the duke, suddenly pulling out his watch, assured me that we should be both much better amused and instructed by looking in to see how the new ballet went off. "You can see these game-cocks sparring at any time." Yes, my dear fellow, thought I, too much of your amusement and instruction has proceeded from the source you mention; but come, if you

are determined to make a fool of yourself, I suppose I must bear you company.

It is a strange mood of the mind, when downright sorrow and heaviness of spirits prompts us to enact the unnatural part of excessive mirth; but so it sometimes happens. I joined in the duke's applause of his favourite, with the most leaden indifference during the dance; but no sooner did I find myself fairly seated at a post-operative supper, than I determined to sever my chains if possible for a few brief hours, and join the light-hearted ranks of those around me. We conducted ourselves very discreetly—after the manner of the ancients: but I need not pursue the follies of the evening further. Awaking at ten the next morning, I found myself on one of my friend's sofas, and he himself much in a similar situation, on another opposite. Finding how late it was, I took the liberty of rousing him, and, speedily bathing, we went to breakfast.

With the return of more sensible proceedings, came back the recollection of the interview that was before me, and I accordingly hurried off to the hotel to dress. Alas! misfortunes never come single—I had no sooner set my foot upon the threshold than I was told that a servant with an express from Portsmouth had been waiting for me during the last two hours. "Show him in"—and Dickson stood before me, pale and wearied with the fatigue of travelling.

"I hope nothing serious has happened, Dickson?"

"I'm main sorry though to say, sir, that there has; for the admiral was taken queerish on the very morning that you went away, sir; he's been getting worse and worse ever since, till the middle of last night, when he ordered you to be sent for: so as I was coming up to town, sir, I was to send down one or two doctors at the same time."

"And how long have you been here?" I demanded, sinking into a chair.

"Nigh two hours, sir."

"And who are these medical men? Did you bring up any letters to them? I hope you forwarded them immediately!"

"O yes, your honour, and they're down on their way to the 'Folly' by this time: one of them desired me to give you this, sir, and say that he hoped you'd soon follow;" putting into my hand the card of the celebrated Mr. Cl——c.

"Did you go to him after you'd been here, or before?"

After, sir."

"Then he goes down to the admiral, I suppose, with the intelligence that I was not to be found?"

"Why, your honour, that was the true dead reckoning o' the matter, and your honour 'll see I couldn't come for to understand"—"Well, no matter!—we will be off instantly—call for everything you want, and lose no time."

The waiter came, and the necessary orders given for immediate departure, I paused to recover a little of that reflection of which this sudden and distressing intelligence had deprived me. The parallel which this case bore to my father's death at once flashed upon me, and the great age of the admiral made me fear a similar termination. Am I ever then to be thus summoned to bend beneath the stroke of misfortune? What if I should be too late ever to behold him alive again? Bitterly my heart smote me, as I considered the possibility of such a friend having yielded up his last valuable breath, attended only by servants, while I, who owed him tenfold all the duties of a son, without one of its claims, was at that very moment mingling, to say the least of it, in a scene of levity and folly.

Old Joe had not failed, as you may suppose, to write me an account of his beloved master's illness, and, in the deepest distress, implored me to hurry down, for the danger was imminent. In the midst of this, my only consolation was in knowing, that if surgery or medicine could avail him anything, the most eminent of the profession were at his side.

My thoughts next reverted to Cornelia—the hour of appointment was close at hand, and by great management I might yet contrive to see her before the carriage was packed for starting. Leaving this to Dickson and the servant I had brought up from Portsmouth, I wrote a few lines, in case of some unfortunate circumstance again obliging her to stay at home. In this note I informed her of the resolution to which I had come, without stating my reasons, urging her to remain firm in her intention of abiding by me, and implored her to give me that legal claim to protect her, which she had virtually promised me, and which the sacred title of a husband could alone secure. I then concluded, by stating the mournful cause of my hurried departure from town, and my intention to write to her as soon as I should receive her answer at Portsmouth.

Praying that I might be spared the necessity of sending through the cold and somewhat unsafe medium of a letter, a declaration which I had hoped to have the delight of com-

municating in person,—I set off at a furious pace, and out got in the Park, just as the minute-hand of my watch pointed over the agreed time—half-past three. Punctual to a few seconds, I beheld the expected carriage drive up to the spot where I stood—my breast was agitated by a thousand various emotions, in one short instant to be swallowed up in the deepest disappointment. Instead of the speaking, thoughtful countenance of Cornelia, there smirked and smiled in perfect self-complacency the insignificant visage of the little Frenchwoman. What a hatred of that woman rose in my breast at the moment—unreasonable it might have been, but was it not natural?

At any rate I thanked my foresight that had provided for this emergency ; and having delivered the letter I had written, and received the note thus brought to me, the carriage rolled on as before.

As I had expected, the note contained nothing more than the sorrow of the writer at being still unable to leave her mother, and her anxious hope that she should be more fortunate on the succeeding day, together with an expression of the annoyance occasioned by her being thus obliged to disappoint me for the second time.

With a gloomy feeling of affection and foreboding, I put the billet into my pocket-book, and hurried back to the hotel, from which we immediately started, and in eight hours drove up the avenue of the ‘Folly.’ Under what different circumstances had my acquaintance with that spot commenced !

The guarded opinions of the surgeons gave me but little hope, and they were anxious that I should not go into the admiral’s room for some short space, as they had just administered a powerful opiate—their caution was in vain ; he had heard the sound of our wheels ; and scarcely a minute had elapsed, when Royal, who had watched night and day by his side, was sent in person to summon me.

“ Well, boy ! ” feebly said the veteran, returning the clasp of my hand to the best of his abilities, “ I thought that must be you bringing up, though ye didn’t come and tell me so. Take my advice, lad ; always report yourself to the commander-in-chief directly your craft has come to an anchor—’tis but an un officer-like trick at the best, d’ye see, to wait till you’re sent for.”

“ Yes, my dear sir, you’re right,” I replied ; “ I always act on the rule you have laid down,—but your surgeons thought

it better that I should not interrupt you at this moment, as you were on the point of getting a sleep."

"Ay, ay, a mere lubberly idea, boy; all right enough for surgeons and idlers, and those sort o' fellows, but an officer's sleep, boy, ay, or anything else, should never interfere with his reports being regularly made to him, and his duty done in straightforward manner. When I commanded on the windward station d'ye see—" Here the admiral's old surgeon interfered, to beg that I would not allow the admiral to talk, as little exertion might speedily prove fatal.

"What says he, boy? what says he?" demanded the admiral, no way pleased.

"Why, sir, he says that the worst consequences are to be apprehended from your exerting yourself to talk."

The veteran answered not a word, but, turning round his head to where he knew his faithful follower was sitting, said in a tone that still retained a touch of the severity of a former day, "Corporal Royal!"

"Sir," said Joe, suddenly starting up surprised, and standing at "'tention," with the usual motion of the hand to the head by way of salute.

"Clear my cabin!"

"Ay, ay, your excellency;" then turning to the surgeon with a wink of the eye, and a low coaxing tone, he said, "Come now, go—go—go away."

The surgeon shrugged his shoulders and elevated his eyebrows as he looked towards me, but knowing how useless was all opposition, he allowed Joe to elbow him out of the room; and the latter, shooting the bolt with a jerk, faced about once more, saying, "Cabin all clear, your excellency."

"Right, Joe, right. These sharks seem to think," turning to me, "that because an old fellow's anchor's away, and the black pilot on board, that a man isn't to command his own craft. Not yet, boy! not yet! A pretty thing, when I have sent all the way up to town for ye, if I'm not to speak ye, boy, when I get ye alongside! Why if that's to be the case, 'twould be as well, or better, I'd let ye stay where ye had something to amuse ye, instead of making ye watch an old craft steal down to leeward. No, no, my boy! there's the corporal and I, we've just had church aboard in a seaman-like manner; and I've only a word or two to whisper in your ear,

and then I hope, please God, Phil Fluke has done his duty. As for these surgeons and idlers, the lubberly sea-dogs don't seem to know I've only been lying-to, to have one more comfortable mess of chat with ye before I pay off. You know I've a leading breeze in my favour, lad, and lucky 'tis for such a poor old battered hulk, for I should never be able to make my port on a bowline. So never mind their palaver, boy ; if 'tis ten minutes sooner or ten minutes later, what of that?" Here the admiral paused, despite his assumed spirits, and I saw by the motion of his features, that pain was not sleeping within.

"No, no," he resumed presently, "we'll not be badgered about by these fellows just as they like, either. Charles, my lad—my fine fellow! You've been a good boy to me—you've been the son I expected ; and therefore d'ye see, 'twould have been a lubberly trick of me if I hadn't stood to my colours to the last in return, and been, as well as I might, a second father to ye. Corporal Royal there has got my sealed orders, all logged down in due form, and you'll find—"

"My dear sir—my kind, dear friend, do not trouble yourself to mention—"

"Steady now, lad! hold hard—just let me go my own lengths, boy, and I'll thank ye. I know what's trouble, or should know by this time, or I've lived some fourscore years for nothing—so bear in mind that the will I have given in charge to my secretary, Corporal Royal, is the last and only one, by which I wish my little matters to be disposed of. I hope ye'll find that I haven't forgotten all your kindness, boy, and obedience to a poor, blind, fidgety old admira', whom God forgive for all he's done amiss."

—"Amen, your excellency! amen!" mumbled the corporal, in a tone that betrayed his emotion.

"Well, well, so I hope it may be, but hold up your head, you old horse!—and cease your blubbering, d'ye see, as it only interrupts the little I have to say, and doesn't make me feel anything the more comfortable either : nor yet—d've mark me?—can it make me think anything more of your own cross-grained liking to your old master ; for I must say this for ye, Mister Joe, though you have presumed now and then, you old scoundrel, to luff up athwart my bows in a breeze, yet still I must say you've done your duty, Joe—done your duty right well—so hold your head up, you old fool! Our cruise together is out

here below, likely enough, but, d'ye see, if your old commander can only pass muster aloft with half the—the—”

“ Honour, your excellency.”

“ No, no, no, Joe—God forbid I should think that!—but if an old fellow, I say, should only get half the allowance made for his lapses aloft, that his country's been kind enough to make for him below, why—ye understand me—he may yet be able to get a berth for an old follower, who won't be far off after all! To be sure, you old dog-fish, you'll be wanting some one to bother in the meantime; but there's Captain Arran, I've asked him to be plagued with ye, and plague enough for his money you'll take care to give him, I'll be sworn—so hold up I say, hold up, Joe! Why hang it, you old fool!—if ye haven't made me as bad as yourself. Where's my snuff-box?—Give me a pinch!—Ay, so. There, Joe, you've carried it long enough for me, now carry it, you silly old fellow, for yourself, and when you're spinning your long yarns about ‘poor old Fluke that's dead and gone,’ you may say it was the great Hawke's box, before it ever was your master's. Hark ye, sirrah—d'ye hear me, Joe?—when ye make away your property, let it go with the freehold; for though I am fool enough to give it ye, I shouldn't like it to go to the three balls some day! Ay, ay, I know what you would say, but ye may as well hold your tongue; and now let's turn to something else. Get out my memoirs. You'll find, as I told ye, Charles, that everything I wish ye to do is properly noted down in my last orders; but there's a word or two I wish to say to ye about the memoirs. Royal and myself—d'ye mark me, boy?—have had a hardish set-to at them: but we've got them pretty well near the end at last. Ye'll find all the letters and correspondence duly inserted and attached in their proper places, and the few that are to come in, towards the end, are all labelled in packet B, number four; and the making of your name they'll be for ye. There may be some seventy or eighty pages yet, to conclude the memoirs themselves, likely enough, and perhaps 'tis only proper it should be so. 'Tis for the best, boy, d'ye see?—no doubt of it; for it doesn't become an officer, whatever his rank or standing may be, to dwell on the winding-up of the matter—the peroration, as ye call it, which mostly turns on the character of the individual, being a summary—d'ye mark me, boy?—of all he may have been fortunate enough to do, and the honours that his king and country may have been pleased

to bestow on him. Yes, yes, 'tis much better this should be left to a third party, honourable though friendly. Now, touching the dedication, boy, you will see I have dedicated it to my brothers in arms—the British Navy, and, in particular, therefore, to Prince W—ll—m H—n—y, who must always be considered as the head of it; for ye see, boy, when I was on the windward station, I had him under me in the Pegasus. I wouldn't long delay a work of such importance to the country—I know ye must pay a decent respect to private memory, and 'tis right, but then there are other and more important claims. And now, Royal, let's know how's the wind."

"West and by north half north, your excellency."

"Fine weather, then, we shall have. Have we much of it, Joe? Does my flag blow out well? No answer! D'ye hear me, sirrah?"

"Why—why—why, your excellency," replied Joe, in some hesitation, "I fear they've made a bit of a mistake."

"What's that, sirrah?"

"Why, sir, I don't see your flag aloft at all."

"Aha!—who's dared to strike my flag before I'm fairly away? Ring the bell, sir, directly, and have it hoisted. Ay, and let me know, I say, who's dared to strike it."

The bell was rung—the message to hoist the flag despatched.

"Charles, Charles, my boy, your hand!—where are you?—quick! quick!—turn me on my side—oh!—oh!—" In an instant the wish was complied with. Alas! it was the last we ever had the melancholy pleasure of performing.

"Your flag's hoisted, your excellency," said Joe, as he saw the bunting rise from the ground and flutter to its airy height. The admiral replied not. With quick alarm I looked upon his features, and felt the hand that still retained my own—another agonizing look, and the sad conviction was too evident—my generous benefactor was no more!

CHAPTER XXI.

I WILL not trust myself to linger over the week of affliction that intervened between the decease of my poor old friend, and the morning in which we followed him to the repulsive couch of man's last sleep. As he himself had said, the corporal had drawn up his will, and therefore was able to inform me of its contents, without risking the indecency of consulting it before the proper period which custom had prescribed. I think I need not tell you, that the most minute of his directions were as precisely followed as if he had still been alive to witness their performance. Alas! it was the only pleasure which inexorable death had left to me.

The time at which his burial should take place, the spot, the mode, the mourners—and these indeed were not few—in everything his instructions were fulfilled to the letter, even to those requested to be present at the opening of his last testament.

As the admiral had given me to understand, almost the entire bulk of his property, landed and personal, was bequeathed to me, amounting altogether to a hundred and seventy thousand pounds as nearly as could be calculated. This, I was told, would be the value after the numerous legacies were paid, which, as you may imagine, were all left in the truly generous spirit that so marked the noble character of the beloved testator.

There was a period when the prospect of this little fortune would have filled me with transports of delight, but now the news fell coldly on the ear that had so recently vibrated with the expiring accents of its dearest friend!

Among the many who sat around and listened to the bequests by which they were so greatly benefited, I firmly believe there was not one who failed to share the emotions of my own bosom.—How well I remember that sad afternoon! Never can it be effaced from my remembrance.—The group of strangers and visitors had dispersed, and, accompanied by poor Joe, I

walked out upon what had once been the darling pride of the departed admiral—his quarter-deck. There was everything as on the day I had first seen it; the guns, the capstan—the main-deck battery, and the flag-staff. My heart drooped however as I beheld the symbol of the deceased veteran's rank mournfully waving half-mast high, as though conscious of the change that afflicted all around it.

Nor did poor Joe feel less than myself—no longer with his usually erect and military air, but utterly dejected and cast down, he followed by my side, giving his grief no utterance, save such as a deep sigh afforded, or such as might be traced in some pithy expression of sorrow, comfort, and resignation, as, “Well, well-a-day! we must all die!—the riper the corn the nigher the sickle!”

Seeing how fruitless was a meditation of such a mournful though not unpleasing import, I did my best to divert Joe from his melancholy reflections, by entering on the load of business that had now devolved upon me; and, sending him to look in the admiral's cabinet for some necessary papers, I turned over in my own mind the unhappy situation of Cornelia. On the day which followed the poor old admiral's decease, I had written to her to communicate the melancholy intelligence, and implore her to bear up for a short time longer against the load of misery which now oppressed her, for that I hoped the period of its termination was at hand, again pressing her to an instant but secret marriage. To this, by return of post, I received an answer, saying, that she had already put herself under my guidance, and would abide by that decision. All that now remained for me was to adopt my plan—and that I felt should be immediate. In a few minutes, Royal returned with the documents required. These he gave to me, and with them an epistle, written in a hand which I was utterly unable to recognise.

“Surely,” said I, after reading the letter,—“surely my name should be Job, that thus one calamity seems to tread upon the heels of another!” The missive which I held in my hand was from the mother of Will Watch; it bore date a week prior to my time of receiving it, and entreated me to hurry to the assistance of my old friend, who had been taken up and imprisoned, on a charge of attempting to murder the excise-officer of the district. She informed me that the trial of her son was expected to come on almost immediately, and that she had no

one on whom to rely for any assistance; for that her son had refused to apply to me, from a reluctance to give trouble in a quarter from whence he had before, to use his own words, "received help out of a worse scrape." She had, therefore, made bold to write herself, in token of which was subscribed a cross with the words "Mary Watch, her mark."

Her amanuensis, whoever it might have been, poor soul! was scarcely better versed in the art of calligraphy than herself; and owing to the scrawling hand, and I suppose to the difficulty also of writing even that scrawl, not a word further was said in explanation of a catastrophe which you may well suppose was little calculated to add to my ease of mind.

Not knowing therefore how far this annoying matter had proceeded, whether the trial was now pending, or had already passed, or whether there was yet a possibility of my aid proving effectual, I determined, after a brief consultation with the corporal, to set off that very night, and gain and render in person the intelligence so necessary and the assistance so required. The admiral must have received this just before his fatal attack—have put it in his cabinet with the intention of forwarding it to me, but, alas! death—I could not fill up the sentence!—When I reflected on all I had lost, my heart was indeed filled with bitterness.

Our arrangements for starting were soon made. I had before intended to write off to Cornelia, and this now decided me. A week only remained before she would be called on by her mother to give a final answer to the claims of her relentless suitor. Informing her of the new cause of delay, I promised to be as briefly absent as possible, and assured her that my next letter should contain the plan for our marriage, on which she was to act. Leaving orders then for her letters to be forwarded, I set off, and, before the sun had sunk, Royal and myself were some way advanced upon our road. In usual cases I would have taken London in the route, but, as speed had become of the first importance, I resolved to adopt a sailor's course, and cutting across the country by the by-roads, in as short a line as possible, make direct for my point.

Neither man nor horse were particularly spared during the journey, and at seven on the ensuing evening we drove up to an inn at Highcliff; fagged and jaded indeed, but I thanked my stars that there we were.

With as calm a mien as I could possibly assume, I drew

aside the landlord, and, pretending to be chiefly interested in the preliminary inquiry of what was to be had for supper, next demanded if he knew anything of a person named "WATCH." "Will Watch?" said he, shaking his head. "Ay, poor fellow! there's few in this town that haven't heard about him,—and a sad story 'tis—ay, sir, and likely to be worse—though a year or two agone, there wasn't a quieter boy in the place, or a better; but hard usage, sir—hard usage will make many a man turn to bay, who, if he'd been left alone, would 'a gone on quietly to the end of the chapter, as ye may say."

"Why, that's true enough, landlord! but I hope nothing very serious has happened to him?"—"Serious, sir?" The landlord looked in my face, as much as to say, where do you come from, that you are so ignorant. "So serious, that I fear 'twill soon be all over?"—"Coming, sir! coming!" to a customer who was calling—"all over, I say, with him."

"Does his trial, then, come on so soon?"

"Trial! Why, bless ye, what be talking of? Will Watch's trial was over the day before yesterday, and sentence recorded against him, and not a hope, as I can see, of his getting out of it?"—"Coming, sir, coming!"—"I'll be with ye again presently, sir,"—and my informant hurried out to the bar-room, leaving me in a state of mind not to be envied.

"What's to be done, Joe?" said I, turning to my trusty corporal, who had heard this news.

"Why, your honour, if you want to follow my opinion, you'll get up and come along with me. Let's find out Will himself. Ye see, sir, he must be in limbo somewhere here-about, and 'tis fifty times better to hear what he's got to say for himself, than trust to the yarns of this chap, who, your honour may take your after-davit, has no more feelings than one of his own horses, or he wouldn't beat his retreat in such fashion—leaving a Christian just about to be hanged, without so much as giving a shipmate even a blind hint, how or where to cut the rope, as your honour may say!"

"Why, Joe, there does seem some sense in your observations, and, as the landlord is evidently in no hurry to return, the less time we lose the more we shall be able to effect: so let us go and find out the mayor at once, and through him we may manage, as you say, to hear Will's own story."

"Ay, ay, sir! that's something like! 'Tis a free course, as the dear old admiral would have said: God bless him!"

Within ten minutes I had managed to discover the house of the ruling functionary, and preferred my request. At first his worship, who was a knight and a huge pompous fat man, looked very grave and shook his head, and remarked that it was after gaol hours ; but a little reasoning brought him to, though, I believe, in sooth, it was a reasoning peculiar to honest Joe, who soon contrived to make him understand that his petitioner was a post-captain in His Majesty's service, and therefore, in Joe's opinion, a person of some consequence, and not very likely either to put the prisoner into his hat, or crumble the gaol into his waistcoat-pocket. However, our united arguments prevailed. The mayor wrote out the order for our admission to see Will, and, on presenting it to the turnkey, we were ushered into the cell of his confinement.

It was on a fine summer's evening that I thus found myself once more with one who had served me so well !—one who possessed so many good, I may truly say beautiful, points of character—yet one who seemed so marked out for ruin ! It would seem that even his gaolers had been won over by his kindly qualities, despite of the hardening effects of their degrading occupation, since the turnkey, as he unlocked the door, sang out in a good-natured voice, “ Watch, my boy ! Here's some friends come to see ye.” He then retired, but without drawing the bolts, and we heard him commence pacing up and down in the passage outside.

We found Will in profound meditation, sitting on the low palliasse, which served him at night for a bed. He arose on the summons of his keeper, and, quickly discovering who we were, advanced with the electric bound of joy, saying, “ God bless you, Mr. Arran !” In another moment, however, he paused, as if conscious that he was not all he might have been, and ignorant of the manner in which I intended to meet him. I soon, however, set his mind at rest on this score, by taking his hand, while Joe, getting hold of the other in a double grasp, shook it with all the affectionate fervour of one old shipmate towards another in distress, exclaiming,—

“ Why, Will, my lad ! How's this ? how's this ? Glad to see ye, my true blade, anywhere ! and anywhere rather than here ; and so says Captain Arran there : for he isn't mister any longer, ye see, Will. Captain Arran here has a yarn to spin with ye, so I won't make a listener, as it isn't a very soldier-like sort of go ; I'll just step out and keep that old turnkey in

jaw ;" and the corporal, slipping outside, left Will and myself alone.

For a few minutes neither of us spoke, I waiting for Will to commence his explanation, and Will waiting for me to put a question. Willing to terminate this, I said : " Tell me, Watch, what means this letter ?" (producing his mother's.) " Can it be true that you have been taken up on a charge of——?" " Ay, sir," replied Will, dejectedly, and interrupting me before I got out the fatal word, " too true for me, I fear ! Taken up—tried—condemned !—and the day after to-morrow, they tell me, sir, to be executed."

" Merciful Heaven, Watch ! Do you mean this ?" seating myself by his side, for it was the only seat in the place. " Who, or what has brought you to this ?" Will replied not a word, and, though his face was buried in his hands, I saw by the convulsive heaving of his body, how dreadfully he was agitated.

" Surely, Will," said I, " you may confide in one who always has been, and ever will be, your friend till his last hour !—Tell me, I beseech you, the cause of all this misery !"

" O God !—my little sister, Fan !——"

" What ?——" " My own, my darling sister, little Fanny !" springing up with dreadful violence, and then suddenly falling down at my feet upon the cold stone, trembling like one in an ague fit, and dashing his head upon the pavement in convulsive agony.

" Watch !" I cried, struggling to quiet him—" for your own sake—for mine—for the sake of every one connected with you, do be calm :—I have not deserved this at your hands. Bear your misfortunes like a man—be calm, and endeavour to tell me what has happened, that I may be better able to assist you." " A man, a man ! Misfortunes ! sir, you don't know half—you only see the gallows ; I fear it not—it isn't death !—it isn't death !" Springing on his feet once more, and pacing up and down for a few moments—" Bear it ? What man could bear it ?—and such a sister !—it isn't death, God knows ! If I had only never been born !"—and then he flung himself down on the mattress behind me, and burst into a flood of tears.

" No, no, sir," resumed Will, rising, seemingly relieved by this paroxysm, " it isn't that, as you may believe ; I'd have met death and gladly, ten thousand times over for her sake, but this !—this, sir," holding down his head, " 'tis too hard to stand !"

Unable to make any further resistance to the emotions struggling within him, Will now fairly gave way to the anguish pressing at his heart, and wept like a woman.

Soon renewing, of his own accord, the thread that he had broken off, Will continued : “ ‘Twas a pity, sir, you ever took the trouble to save me that time from Mr. Kerslake ! Then —let what would have happened—I should have died in a good cause, and no one could have blamed me, and little Fan would have been my Fanny to the last—but now—come what may, there’s nothing below here for Will, but shame, sir, and sorrow.

“ Poor girl ! ” he resumed presently, in a calmer tone, “ may God help and aid her ! I won’t believe that she isn’t innocent, yet how can I think otherwise ? You know, sir, when that affair occurred in the Downs ?—Well, directly I got ashore, I went into hiding, as you’ve heard, may be, but perhaps you haven’t been told who ‘twas with. As ill luck would have it, the only snug place that I knew of, was one called West Cave. I’d often been in it when I was living with my old uncle at Greybeach ; for the good old chap used now and then to smuggle a little drop of tape or brandy, just as it might be, for himself ; and so I got to know a roaring crew, who had no other living, ye see, sir, but that of running kegs. Well, I suppose they thought me a handy little chap, or something, but for my misfortune they took a liking to me, and once or twice they took me out to sea with them, and brought me back to help in running their cargoes ; and so they got to make a sort o’ plaything of me, and used to tell me, if ever I should come and be one of them, I should be the head hand amongst them. Now, sir, the fellow that I’d tumbled in alongside of, was a reg’lar old stager ; he knew every landing-place on this side of the water, for a hundred and fifty miles round,—ay, sir, and every port on the other, let it be where it might ; and so he’d always been one of the prime hands among the old crew. They’d nicknamed him Billy the Devil, sir, and that’s the only name I ever knew him by, and a regular dare-devil he was ; nothing made any odds to him when once a landing was planned, blow high or low, storm or calm, whether they kept a look-out for him, or whether they didn’t : he’d always been most in danger, and the least often taken. He’d been to serve two spells in the king’s navy, but the last time he managed somehow to run, and deserted. He was no chicken, was Billy, sir, for he stood about six feet four inches high, and stout withal ; and

what with his whiskers, and one thing and another, he looked as dark as a negro. As for wounds and scars! he was covered with them from top to toe. Well, ye see, sir, as soon as he saw me, he gave me a right hearty welcome, and as he'd lately boned a deer from Lord —'s park, which isn't many miles off, we set-to before a glorious fire in the old hole, and what with the spirit, so plenty and handy, and what with old stories, I was in for a night of it, before I knew where I was; then, very naturally, sir, I opened my heart, much more than I ever thought for, and let him know why I was playing hide and seek. Well, ye see, sir, as soon as he knew this, he determined I shouldn't get out of his clutches; so next day he went down into the town of Highcliff, pretending to learn if there was much of a hue and cry for me, and brought back two other fellows, with long tales of rewards being offered, and search made here, there, and everywhere. Well, that night, sir, there was a cargo to be run, and being fine and dark, and everything in proper trim, they ask'd me if I wouldn't go and lend a helping hand—”

Will hung down his head for a few moments at this part of his narrative, and then continued: -

“I know 'twas wrong in me, sir—I know 'twas, and more like a fool than anything else—but somehow I couldn't bear to refuse a good turn to Billy, who was a capital fellow at bottom, tho' belike a little rough or so; and as he'd been glad enough to go shares with me, and take me into his mess, when I hadn't another hole to lay my head in, why, ye see, sir, I thought myself obligated to do as much for him, so I went.—However, bad led to worse, and before I thought of doing any harm, I found myself made what they once used to promise—head of a gang of smugglers, while Billy the Devil was to be my lieutenant, as ye may call it. 'Twas all done over our cups one night, and hard enough I tried to fight off against it. But it was no use—they said that I wanted to peach against them, and so I gave in—tho' it was scarcely done, before I felt I was a sold man! I thought of you, sir, next morning, and all you'd say and think, when you heard of what I'd become; and I felt as if I could have hung a stone about my neck, and gone right over the cliff-head into the sea. However, sir, they were quick enough to see what I was thinking of, and they didn't leave me much time for that; and what with this wanting looking to, and that wanting something more, in a few weeks,

ye see, sir, I felt less and less of it, till the trade seemed to come quite natural to me!—Perhaps I mightn't have fallen into it so readily, if the old 'oman hadn't seemed to think it was all right; for, ye see, sir, as her first husband used to carry on along shore, she held out 'twas all in the way of business, and a good heritable trade, which I'd as much right to as the king to his crown. And as to—to—Fanny—” For a moment I thought the mention of this name would have arrested his story—but it was only for a moment.

With a strong effort he proceeded:—

“ As to Fanny, sir—to be sure, she cried, and begged and prayed that I wouldn't give myself up to it; but ah, sir! for once I thought—yes, I may say it—for once I thought she wasn't to be trusted. 'Twas hard!—'twas cruel to think so—'twas breaking my heart every time it came across me, and I tried and tried, but I couldn't get myself to think anything else!

“ I don't know, sir, whether you noticed when I came back from my first leave—belike you did not—for I used my best to hide it,—but even then, I felt somehow that all wasn't as it should have been.”

“ Yes, Watch, I did remark something of the sort.”

“ Well, sir, and so 'twas—I couldn't have said that there was anything wrong about Fanny, but somehow she didn't seem to me to be my own little Fan that I'd left behind some couple of years or so before.

“ When I first came home, I soon saw Fanny didn't think as much of Will as she once used to, nor, for the matter o' that, half as much as Will thought of her. The old 'oman, ye see, sir, was got so fond of taking her kindly drop, that Fan was little or ever looked to, and she'd got into a way of gadding about with the young fellows that lived nigh handy; and they being gentlefolks, ye see, sir, had been cramming her up with their yarns about her pretty face, and so on—ay—and pretty it was, as ever God made, or man looked upon! but it was the last way to make her happy to tell her so—poor little girl! and what with their running after her, and one thing and another, she'd got many ways of thinking into her head, that I could see, as plain as a pikestaff, would only go to make her discontented, and never fit her to be an honest man's wife. Well, sir, this wasn't the thing for me to bear quietly; and sometimes it most maddened me to think what might come of it, and whether or not, it soon settled all my look-out for comfort and

a little happiness during the short spell I was to be at home ; so one day I took little Fanny aside to talk to her about it—I couldn't for the life of me speak harshly to her, when I remembered how we used to love one another, and all she'd gone through for me at one time. So ye see, sir, I showed her the folly of this sort of carrying on, and she was sorry enough for it, as any one could be, and promised me over and over again, that she wouldn't allow these young half-spawned land-lubbers to get about her again. I was right glad to hear her say this, as you may think, sir—I never doubted she'd be as good as her word, seeing for the rest of my leave, she came back to her old rambles with me, and by the time I went away, may I never be believed if I didn't think she was as good a girl as ever lived—ay, and if not as—as—as fond of Will Watch as ever—yet still—ah, sir, that was the worst of her—a softer heart never beat in a bosom than there did in little Fan's—but there !—'twas as soft to one as it was to another, any one could bring her round almost to anything, and yet she didn't want for sense either—If she'd only had a little steadiness !—Poor little Fan !—

“ Well, ye see, sir, this was pretty well ; I'd done all I could, as far as concerned her ; so to make the matter sure, I thought I'd give the young fellows that had been bothering her a denced good hiding, and that'd keep matters all fair and square till I came back again. So I looked out and caught my gemmen, one after another, in some handy sort of place, and paid it into them in reg'lar good man-o'-war's style. I took good care they should guess who it came from, though they should not be able to prove it. I was had up once or twice before the justice, but 'twouldn't do—till in serving out the last fellow, some one came up and caught a sight of me ; so thinking there'd be an awkward reckoning the next morning, I went straight home, took leave of the old 'oman and Fanny, made the little girl promise me over and over again to keep such lubbers at their distance, and then commenced my trudge homewards to join my ship, as you know, sir, tho' my leave was not out by two days. Well, ye see, sir, I heard nothing more about these matters till after that affair of Mr. Kerslake, and my joining the old crew at West Cave, and then one by one—a story cast up here, and a story cast up there. This fellow had been making free to talk to Fanny, and another to write to her, and a third to get her out walking, and I soon

found things were likely to go on as bad as ever, or worse, for the matter of that. For amongst this rascally crew—would you believe it, sir?—if there wasn't the officer of the district!—tho' often and often he'd chased and captured friends of mine, right and left, as ye may say; and over and above all, had got a wife and family of his own!

“So the first thing I did, was to take Fanny aside once more, and speak to her again. I showed her all the work she was likely to make with us, and I must say this for Fan, I soon brought her to—for she couldn't bear, little girl, to think of getting us into trouble. But lor, sir! my back was scarcely turned, before Gresham, that was the name of the district officer, was running after her again, and all I'd said was forgotten!—this went on for some time. One day I walked up to the fellow when I caught him alone, and gave him to know that if he didn't mind his own affairs, and look more to his wife and family, and less to little Fanny, why I'd wring his neck for him very shortly. But even this, ye see, sir, wasn't enough for him; for two days after I came upon him and Fanny walking along under the cliffs—ay, in the very walks where the little girl used once to stroll with me. At first I thought I should have dropped, but then in an instant I felt I could have wrenched his head from his shoulders. Off I set after them full pelt, and soon enough I was up with the little girl, trembling like a leaf; but while I was turning a corner of the rocks, he'd sprung away and made sail above. 'Twas wrong, sir, I don't say that it wasn't, and might 'a' been 'twas cruel too, but I was so put out, after all I'd said to Fan about this business, that I let out at her, without ever so much as thinking what I was about; for, ye see, sir, I was in such a way, I hardly knew whether 'twas my head or my heels I was standing on. God knows, sir, I said many things more than ever I meant, or ever could mean, to my own little Fan. And often and often, when I think I may never see her again!—”

Here Will's tears poured down rapidly.

“I'd give up anything, and life ten times over, to recall those few harsh words!—but 'twon't do!—'twon't do!—poor little Fanny! Well, ye see, sir, I led her home straight, and told her now she might go on as she liked, for the next time I met Gresham, I'd blow his brains out first, and mine afterwards; and off I went to the cave.

“As I was going along, more like a madman than anything

else, who should I meet but old Billy the Devil—he's a kind heart in his rough carcase has Billy, as I said before, so he did all he could to comfort me, and offered, if I'd only give my consent, to get hold of Gresham the first time he could, and give him such a teaching as would learn him better in time to come. ‘Anything,’ said I, ‘Billy, I don’t care what ‘tis; I’ve given him good warning, and as he hasn’t taken it, he must look to that himself.’ Well, ye see, sir, that night we had all our crew at home quarters—all in the cave, or so nigh handy that we could muster ‘em in ten minutes; and as there was no moon, the night was just such a one as we should ‘a’ made on purpose. We all knew the stations which Gresham visited in his rounds; and one in particular, which was close to the edge of the cliff, we fixed on to serve our end. I soon mustered all our hands—clapped them at the right posts, and at half-past one in the morning, as Gresham was coming along with three of his men, I gave the pipe to our crew, and, springing up before and behind him, took all hands of ‘em prisoners before they knew where they were. As soon as ever we’d bound them hand and foot, we bundled them down over the cliffs, got ‘em into the boats, and off we set, long before any of their pistol-shots could bring a man to their rescue. As soon as we got two miles out to sea, there was lay in our oars fore and aft, and hand up Gresham from the bottom of the boat. Well, ye see, sir, I just talked the matter over to him, gave him my mind right heartily, and then handed him to the boat’s crew; for said I to them—‘My lads, you know what a fellow deserves who tries to ruin an honest man’s family, as well as I do, and if you think he deserves being let loose—for the matter of that, whatever you say I’ll abide by.’ At first I was afraid I’d given the fellows too much sea-room, for, hang me, your honour, if they didn’t get ready the killick (stone) of the boat for slinging round his neck, and dropping him overboard. In all my days, sir, I never saw a man in such a taking. It made me as sick as a dog to hear how he begged, and prayed, and palavered about his wife and his family, as if he really did care something about them. ‘No, no,’ says Billy, ‘you should have thought of them before, it’s too late now;’ and so, notwithstanding his kicking and struggling, they made fast the stone to his neck, and his hands and feet being bound already, as I said before, they began to take him up, to give him his sinking pitch. Well, ye see, sir, I let it go so far, for

I thought 'twould do his morals good, just to let him feel the nibble of grim Death's old tooth ; but when it came to this, I knew 'twas time for me to put in my oar for the fellow—not so much upon his account, ye see, sir, as for the sake of the crew ; for I said to them, 'My boys,' said I, 'you shall never put your own necks in danger for a quarrel of mine, so just cut that stone adrift from the dog's carcase, cast adrift his hands and feet, and then chuck him overboard. 'Twill be a good ducking for him—he'll have had enough of it before he gets ashore, and if that does not teach him good manners, why the rascal's past learning, that's all I can say. Well, sir, after a little persuasion, I got 'em to do this—Gresham was unbound, and overboard he went. He was a good swimmer, and soon rose to the surface, and made for the shore. So we gave him a shout to hurry him on, and then took to our oars. Before we made off, we held a sort of capstan-parley what to do with the three other prisoners, and as we wanted to weaken Gresham's men as much as possible, we determined to take them over to 'other shore, and to give them a short swim, just off a little place you may know or have heard tell of, just to the northward and eastward of Calais—Marquise they call it—for here we knew they'd soon be taken prisoners, and we should get rid of them : and after this we made for our own port. Well, ye see, sir, as soon as we came back with a cargo, we found that Gresham had got safe enough to shore, and the whole country was in an uproar about our having played this trick : the fellow himself vowing all sorts of revenge, and swearing he'd live to get me hanged yet. However, I did not care for him as long as he let Fanny alone. But as bad luck would have it, I was obliged to keep so close, that I couldn't get to know as much on that matter as I should have done, and so the affair went on quietly enough for some little time, I hoping, ye see, sir, that I'd brought her to her bearings ; howsoever, on a sudden I heard that late one evening sh'd been seen walking with Gresham again, and I, most maddened to think of it, came down into the town, swearing I'd blow the fellow's brains out if I could but meet him, and determined to look him up, whether or not, let what would come of it."

"But surely, Will," said I, "these were not your intentions?"

"No, sir, no, I can't say they were, but I was in such a taking, I scarcely knew what I was saying, doing, or thinking,

or anything else, for I'd tried all the quiet ways I could hit on, and they were of no more use than a chip in porridge ; and stop it somehow or other, I was determined I would. However, sir, just listen to this. The first place I made for, when I came down from the cave, was the old 'oman's—would you believe it, sir?—I found that Fanny—my own little Fan—had gone!—clean gone!—gone off—." At this period of his story, Will seemed unable to put even the slightest restraint upon his feelings, and starting off into one of his former paroxysms, broke out into the most fearful imprecations on the object of his hatred, as he strode from end to end of his cell—his eyes dilated, his hands clasped, and the foam upon his wasted lips—as if his heaving breast were unable to contain half the conflicting passions that raged within it.

" She'd gone,—she'd gone, sir," he continued, as his tongue regained the power of utterance—" the little girl I'd loved—ay, better than myself—since the happy time we played as children, in the very place where she gave us up to—to—to—Oh ! Heaven, how can I say the word ? But gone she was, sir !—she'd never come back since the night before, and search where we would, all hands of us, we couldn't hear any further tidings, than that she had been seen walking on the beach with Gresham the night before, and never come home since !—and will you believe, sir, that he had no hand in making off with her ? The poor old 'oman, sir, was distracted !—now 'twas too late, she was doing all she could to find Fanny ! But, poor little girl, from that hour to this we've never heard of word or sign belonging to her !"

" Merciful Powers, Watch !" said I, perfectly horrified,—" but have you no reason to apprehend some outrage—some violence ?"—Poor Will shook his head, and the tears which rage had dried, burst forth once more with redoubled vehemence.

" But where then was Gresham ?" said I,—" Was he not the first person at whose hands you demanded your sister ?"

" He was at sea, sir, that very night, in one of his boats, pretending to be on duty. He came ashore about two o'clock in the afternoon, and while I was running raving about, trying to hear something of poor little Fan, who should I come against but him. I no sooner saw him, your honour, than I made right for him.—Springing at him without another word, ' You desperate villain !' said I, ' where is she ?'

“‘Who?—Where is who?’ said he, pretending not to know who I meant.

“‘Who—who but Fanny—my own little girl?’ I cried, drawing out one of my pistols to clap it at his head till he should answer. ‘Tell me, you unhung rascal,—putting the muzzle to his face—‘tell me where you’ve taken her, or I’ll drive your soul out of your body before you draw another breath.’—With more nimbleness than I took him to have, sir, he caught the barrel in one hand and my throat in another, and forcing the cock of the pistol back upon my shoulder, it went off, and the bullet passed through the collar of his coat. In a crack I had him down under me, and another minute would have settled his account in this world, when the report of fire-arms brought three or four of his fellows rushing down upon us. They had the advantage of me, ye see, sir, completely. I did my best to get away, and I could easily have done it, seeing I had more pistols in my belt; but I wouldn’t go to take the lives of the poor fellows, who, after all, were only doing their duty, and more especially when I thought I’d done nothing wrong in trying to make Gresham tell me where he’d taken my little sister; so I let them take me away to the mayor, and in half an hour here was I, ironed in a dungeon, and charged with murder, while that fellow, sir, that had ruined an honest man’s family, was let to go at large, and continued in his duty!”

“Cheer up, Watch, cheer up,” said I, after a few minutes, endeavouring to hide the despondency which I felt. “I cannot bring myself to think that matters are as bad as you seem to imagine. Depend on it, we cannot fail to obtain tidings of your sister soon, and surely, from your story, your own fate—”

“That, sir,—that I care for least of all; ‘tis only the thought of the poor old ‘oman and the possibility of my being of some use yet to little Fan, if she ever should cast up—‘tis only this, sir, which could ever bring me to think of living on!—I suppose, sir, you know all about my trial?”

“Not I, indeed, Watch. I had only just arrived when I found you out; for your mother’s letter had been delayed nearly a fortnight by some misfortune, and I don’t altogether forgive you, for not having written off to me on the instant that you found yourself in this trouble.”

“I hadn’t the heart, ye see, sir, to do it!—I hadn’t, in-

deed!—I'd rather have died, that would I, than told ye how little Will Watch deserved you should put out a hand to help him.—But howsomever, sir, I'll just tell ye about my trial."

CHAPTER XXII.

"WELL, sir," continued Watch in a few minutes, "the long and short of my trial just comes to this. The sessions here at Highcliff, ye see, sir, were just nigh coming on at the time I was taken up, so I hadn't many days to consider of it before I was put on my trial. Now ye see, sir, in order to make the thing a little clear, I must tell ye that the mayor and the other folks in office, called the corporation, have taken a particular grudge against me for something best known to themselves. I'm sure, sir, I can't tell why they should have done so, unless mayhap in some of our private carryings on I may have chanced to hurt some of 'em. This, however, I heard thro' more ways than one, that now I was in their clutches, they'd made their mind up to make the most of me; and that's why they managed that my trial should come on before Mr. Keswick, the recorder. Everybody knows Keswick, sir; ay, and hates him too! for a meaner fellow never perjured himself, and that's saying something for him. However, ye see, sir, Keswick had been put into his berth by this corporation, and doesn't dare to say his soul's his own, if they think fit to call it theirs, and both sides, I'm thinking, are far enough in the wrong there—tis a thing that belongs to neither of them, seeing that the devil himself is master, owner, and supercargo! But let that be—in this short time 'twasn't very difficult to see how matters would go, though I didn't want for friends, I must say that; and if they were but humble, still they strained strand and yarn together to do me all the good they could; the old 'oman first and foremost among 'em all, though she was nigh crazy about poor little Fanny. For 'twas natural enough, when she'd lost one child in such a way, she should be doubly frightened at seeing the other going after in a worse fashion; so one of the first things she did was to get a letter written off to you, and a pretty taking she was in, poor old soul, when she found she got no answer. However, sir, my turn for trial was soon round, and on they went fast enough. I knew nothing of

the right course to steer, ye see, sir—how should I?—but my friends had done all they could for me, and I stuck to what they said, and nothing else. 'Twas soon plain enough to be seen that Judge Keswick had made his mind up to hang me, and as there were plenty of witnesses to prove all that had taken place, they wern't very long about the matter.

" 'Twas a trial, sir, as you may suppose, which drew a great many people from the parts round about, to see if anything could be made out about poor little Fan; but Gresham solemnly swore he knew nothing about her, and hadn't even been walking with her the evening she was missed; though at the same time, sir, one of my fellows would have come forward to swear he'd met 'em, if I would have let him. But this I would'n't do, your honour, as he'd made a run of it from aboard a man-of-war six months before, and they'd have been sure to have had him hard and fast as soon as ever he'd shown himself in court. However, sir, since my trial there's been a separate to do about poor Fanny, and what makes it most wonderful is, that the whole of Gresham's boat's crew swore they were out with him two miles from land, chasing a strange sail, and had been so for an hour and a half, at the very time my man swears he saw him walking with the little girl along the beach. Ah, sir, 'tis a sad, mysterious affair! However, when the judge came to go over, at the last, all that had been said in the business, 'twas plain as a pikestaff to see he was giving it as much against a poor fellow as he possibly could; though I'd never done him any harm, sir, or even thought of it. After 'twas over, the lawyer told me 'twas the most wicked thing that ever could be, was the way he managed to talk over the jury; for, in the charge brought against me, there ere four or five charges all in one, as it might be."

" Yes, Watch, I understand—you mean four or five counts the indictment."

" Ay, sir, just so: that was just the name the lawyer gave it—one, ye see, sir, the worst, was for intent to murder; another, I believe, was for manslaughter; and a third, sir, was, I think, for an assault; and another, if I remember, was for firing at him to do him some bodily harm. Bodily harm! Ay, — but no matter. So, ye see, sir, Judge Keswick took very good care not to make the poor fellows understand the rights of these different charges, or counts,* as ye call them; so that

Fact!

when they came back at last with their verdict, they brought me in guilty—they thinking and meaning that I was guilty of manslaughter. But by rights they ought to have said so, only they'd never been put up to the thing properly. Well, sir, this was just what the judge wanted ; for ~~see~~, in the matter of the law, they tell me that their verdict made me guilty of the first charge, intent to murder ; just as if they thought that I'd pulled the trigger of the pistol, instead of its going off in the struggle : but I know well enough they didn't believe anything like it—they couldn't, ye see, sir, as even Gresham himself didn't believe that. However, sir, the judge knew better than to explain this to them at all, so he went on at once, and passed the sentence that I was to be hanged. Still the jury thought that this was a matter of course, and that I should be transported or something o' that sort, or a pardon got for me ; for an hour afterwards, sir, when they came to know the rights of the matter, they one and all declared, from the foreman down to the youngest man in the box, that if they'd known the rights of it, they never would have brought me in guilty.* Well, this was soon carried to the judge, but he'd made up his mind beforehand to take no notice of it ; so he only declared that it was their own fault, and that 'twas now too late to help it. However, sir, my friends didn't think so, and they soon made such a stir about the business as put Mr. Keswick and the corporation into a way again :—still they seemed determined to have a poor fellow up by the neck—though I don't believe they rightly knew why themselves. However, there was a thing got afloat among my fellow-townsman—a petition to the King, sir, for pardon, and first and foremost down went all the names of my jury.”*

“I hope, Watch,” said I, “that they took care to style themselves such.”

“Ay, sir, that did they, all in a lump, with their foreman at their head ; and then there came the names of almost every one in the town ; for I must say this for them—as far as I’m concerned,—they all of ‘em have been more kind than I’ve ever deserved. But ‘twas for little Fanny’s sake they did it, I know ! I’m not so bold as to think ‘tis for mine—poor little girl !”

“And when, Will,” said I, after a pause, “when was this petition sent off to London ?”

“Why, sir, I hardly know, for the matter of that—some Fact !

time yesterday. But I know the answer is expected back to-night."

"And there then it must surely be!" said I, as the noise of distant shouting came [REDACTED] my ear, amid the silence of the dungeon.

"Will—Will, my boy!—here's your pardon come!" cried honest Joe, suddenly rushing in, and waving his hat above his head as he wildly capered about.

"Wait—wait—wait—stop a minute!—don't say that to the poor lad before 'tis a certainty!" interrupted the gaoler, as suddenly making one of the party.

"Stop you here then," said I, "till I can go out and ascertain the truth;" and seizing my hat, I darted forth, with Joe following at my heels.

Seeing the crowd hurrying on towards the London road, which opened into the market-place, nearly fronting the gaol, we both directed our steps as fast as we could in the same direction, and soon descried a post-chaise tearing along towards us at full pelt.

Alas!—the flight of few things can be compared with that of evil tidings! Long before the vehicle in question was within anything near a communicating distance, and when yet, indeed, we could only make out that it was a post-chaise with four horses,—a low murmur ran along the dense crowd that lined the approach to the little town; thus testifying the intense excitement which Will's fate created, and the eager desire to learn what it was.

On came the carriage at a tearing gallop, and my heart sunk at the foreboding sound which had already outstripped it!—not an instant's pause was made—I looked to see if any signal was given from within—but no—I could discover none:—still on they came—the murmurs swelled into a groan—the groan into a shout—shouts into hissing—hissing into fierce abuse—and, by the time the chaise dashed past us, it was amid a hurtling shower of stones and filth, accompanied by the wildest yells of execration and of rage.

Poor Will! thought I, can it indeed be so?—I involuntarily looked around me at the crowd, and observed it to consist chiefly of rough seafaring men, and their hardy wives and families—revenge and anger in their looks, curses on their lips, and their feet with one accord in hasty tread towards the house of the magistrate, to whose door the carriage had driven. So

thronged was every avenue of approach by this assemblage, that Joe and myself had only just time to arrive opposite to the mayor's windows, when Sir Thomas * * himself came out into his balcony with a paper in his hand.

The yells and hootings raised on his appearance were most deafening ! At length by waving his hand, and other signs of entreaty, some little silence was granted, so that I could just hear him say—"Good people!—be orderly—retire home to your houses—I am only sorry to say that we have been disappointed!"

"Off! off! shame! shame! murder!" were the cries now furiously bellowed forth in instantaneous reply. Sir Thomas luckily saw what was coming, and darted back, as quickly as his age would permit, into his own drawing-room. In another instant not a pane of glass in the front of his house was left whole ! Immediately after this act of violence, the mob divided into two parties—one, the younger and worst part of the rabble, remained screaming and yelling before the shattered windows of Sir Thomas * *, and the other, or grown-up division, marched off to the market-place, in which stood the gaol. With this portion were borne along Joe and myself, as completely carried off the ground for many paces of the way as if we had been possessed of some extraordinary mode of volition unknown to man in a state of nature.

"Stick close to me, Joe, for your life!" cried I, turning my head round.

"Ay, ay, sir!" replied the corporal, "I'm hanging on hard and fast by your honour's rudder-chains!" meaning my coat-tails.—"Look!—look! look, sir, there they go, by jingo!—to it rarely!—Huzza! my hearties—I would say if I dared."

Facing about once more, to see what it was that so engrossed Royal's thoughts, what should I behold but a ladder placed against the gaol front, and resting on the little parapet which ran round the low tiled roof of the old building. Up this ladder were crowding a swarm of women, headed by an animal so amphibious in appearance, that it might in truth have passed for one of the corporal's own gallant corps, but for the coarse and ample petticoats of blue serge, which set forth the wearer's claims to be considered of the softer sex.

The dress of this amazon—for such she might well be called—consisted of the habiliment already named, surmounted by way of spencer, with the red coat of some old veteran, over

the collar of which hung down a large quantity of frizzled hair in long gray locks; while the last, instead of being confined by cap or bonnet, possessed no other covering than that of a superannuated military cocked-hat. With one hand she enabled herself to ascend the ladder, while with the other she held the handle of a pick-axe, carried over her shoulder in the usual way.

With an agility strangely at variance with her colossal proportions, this extraordinary personage mounted the ladder at the head of her battalion, all similarly armed, amid the cheers and huzzas of the excited populace. Not a word, however, did she utter herself, until she had securely gained the low parapet, when, standing upright, she displayed to view a most commanding figure certainly, and a countenance yet distinguished by a coarse kind of beauty, and strongly marked with the passion of the moment.

Taking off her cocked-hat and waving it for an instant above her head, she returned the clamorous applauses of the crowd with a wild shout, and then, raising her pick-axe with both hands above her head, sprung in on the tiled roof, and commenced the work of demolition; while the crashing sounds of her blows were heard amid all the uproar.

“Huzza! huzza!” vociferated the mob, as the tiles came down in clattering fragments upon the pavement below.—“Huzza, Mother Watch! that’s the way! down with it! down with it to the ground!”

“Hang me!” cried Joe, as soon as he heard this, “if I didn’t think I knew the old girl again; though her phiz is so plaguy altered!—don’t ye know her now, sir? Don’t ye see, ‘tis Will’s mother herself?”

“Yes, Joe, yes—so I do!”

“Ay, ay, ‘tis she herself, by Jove!” cried Joe; “she’ll soon have our Will out, whether or no, Tom Collins! She mounts a fascine, your honour, as sharply as if she’d served all her life in the light infantry. That’s right! go your rig, old lass! go it, now or never!—heart alive, sir! look at the girls there to the right of the roof!—If they haven’t laid bare the rafters and cross-buttocks already, may I never taste drop of grog again!—Bravo! bravo!—there go the tiles—there go the rafters—there goes the dust, clouds upon clouds, you can scarcely catch a sight of them.”

As the corporal, in all the excitement of the moment, thus

gave way to his vivid hopes for Will's escape, and rubbed his hands with mingled fear and delight, as each moment brought still nearer the liberation of his old shipmate, Mother Watch on her part lost no time.—“Jump along, my girls!” we heard her stentorian lungs shouting through the din.—“Don't fear to make use of your pick-axes;—you've only the lath and plaster of the ceiling to get through, and your job's over—to it with a will then! I'll help ye at it, that will I—down below there!” addressing some one in the crowd—“You, Billy the Devil, my darling jewel!—hand us up the fag-end of your rope now, for the beautiful life and soul of ye!”

“Rope, 'tis! mother,” answered a gruff voice from the crowd.—“Back, back, my boys, all of you, give us room to swing an arm,” continued the same individual—whirling the coil of rope round his head; and then flinging it with all the strength of his herculean form to the top of the gaol—“Well flung, Billy, my boy, if you never take a cast again!” replied Mother Watch, dexterously catching the end of the coil, and rapidly fastening it to the principal beams that supported the gable end.

“Dang it now, Mother Watch—I say that's too bad!” cried out the old corporal as he saw this formidable manœuvre.—“Why, hang me, if those two beams don't hold up half the roof! d'ye see, sir?—Why, come back, Captain Arran!—Come back, Mr. Charles, I say!—Nothing less'll serve that daring old devil than having the gaol down upon our heads, I see that very plain—now do—do'e come back, sir, you're most as bad as her;” and Joe pulled at my coat skirts as fiercely as did the surrounding multitude on the rope of Mother Watch.

“Nonsense, Joe, we're quite safe here!” I replied, too much absorbed by the scene before me to notice his earnestness.

“Safe here, sir!—not we—now why won't ye come back?—well, well, if you won't, I will—my skull's not so thick as some persons'.”

“Hand along!—here ye are—hand along the tow-line,” cried some of the ring-leaders, passing the rope among the crowd.—“Have ye got hold of it there, my lads?”

“Ay, ay,” answered they—“All fast.”

“Heave taut then!—one, two, three, and away! Now then—*one!*”—and on the instant there was a violent oscillation of the struggling mass around us—those who were unable to ob-

tain a hold of the rope itself, catching fast the arms and bodies of those who had been more fortunate.

“*Two!*” cried out the spokesman,—and a second and similar, and more powerful movement followed the utterance of the word. *

“Now then, heave with a will—*three!*”—again cried the same voice:—a tremendous shout arose in unison from the crowd, accompanied by a simultaneous rush—the rope tightened up to its point of attachment on the top of the building, and, in an instant, over came the beams, tiles, and parapet, into the street below.

The stunning sound of the falling rubbish pretty well stifled the cries of the hurt, if such there were; and, when the volumes of dust gradually cleared off, there stood the remains of the unroofed gaol—the chimneys alone standing untouched upright—the beams and rafters crashed and fallen in, in every direction—nearly the whole of the parapet-wall pulled down, and with it a very considerable portion of the frontage, thereby causing a complete, or—as Joe termed it—“a rale practicable breach” into the interior of the building.

While conjecturing what might have become of Mother Watch, and her fair myrmidonians, my attention was attracted by a sudden rush of the crowd up a narrow lane, running by the side of the late gaol, and dividing it from the Town-hall over the way. At this instant a shout was raised among us, of “The soldiers!—the soldiers!” Looking up the lane in question, opposite to which we now stood, I perceived the head of a small column moving down upon us.

“Come, Joe,” said I, on seeing this warlike demonstration, “there are some of your friends, and you may stay here and receive them if you like, but to my mind their bullets are more to be feared than even hardened mortar, falling beams, or broken brickbats;—besides, it would look anything but well in the Gazette, for a king’s officer to be shot in a mob, at a forcible gaol delivery; so let us be off.”

“Why, ay, sir, I told ye you’d better move out of this—not that they fellows, by the look of them, are going to fire yet awhile, and, as for the bayonets, they seem so jammed up in that lane by the mob, they haven’t room even for a charge—but however, Captain Charles, here comes the officer commanding the detachment, and who is it he’s got with him? Why, it must be the mayor and his people, by the rig of ‘em!”

—alluding to that worthy functionary, who, with one or two of his aldermen, had managed to break the blockade of his own house, and now, with their sabled robes hastily donned, were creeping down to the hall under cover of the troops' muskets, shivering and shaking all the while with the effects of extreme terror.

The whole posse having entered the Town-hall, and slammed-to the doors as speedily as possible, the officer soon afterwards came out and put himself at the head of his men, while Sir Thomas, who, with the consciousness of shelter, had assumed also some little show of daring, boldly popped his fat head out of the window, screaming, “Now, my brave lads! —fire away! don’t be afraid, fire!” and as instantly withdrew himself again, as if to give a practical illustration of what “being afraid” meant. Surely, thought I, they can never have been reading the Riot Act in that clandestine manner, and within closed doors. Woe betide that officer if he acts on such authority! A few minutes convinced me that I was right in my conjecture, for the order thus given was not—fortunately for us—obeyed. We had just managed, with no slight difficulty, to squeeze ourselves through the crowd, out of the strict line of fire, when our attention was turned to another point—the three-fold clamour.

“Hip, hip, hurrah!—hurrah!—Will Watch for ever!—Three cheers for Mother Watch, my boys—hip, hip, hurrah!” vociferated the multitude, waving their caps and hands, and testifying their joy by every other demonstration in their power. “There, there she is, sir!” cried Joe, “and if there isn’t our old shipmate too,” pointing up to the top of the late gaol. I looked, and there indeed was Will scrambling across one of the displaced beams, and busily employed in helping his parent up from the mass of wreck and rubbish that seemed to be below them.

“Go back, Will—go back—go over the back of the houses, Will!” shouted the mob to their released captive; seeing that he paused in doubt, as he beheld the soldiers drawn out at the head of the lane. At this moment his mother, with the quickness of lightning, caught a sight of the red coats, and, apprehending the danger in an instant, sprang with her large form between them and their prey.

“Now, my brave lads! now!” cried Sir Thomas, popping

out his bald pericranium once more. "Now's the time for your muskets—fire at the old devil—fire!"

"Muskets, you old serpent!" as instantaneously replied Mother Watch, advancing to the very edge of the gable-wall that formed part of the lane, and shaking her huge fist at the window opposite, containing the sleek antagonist she was almost able to reach: "Fire away, you pitiful thingummy!—I don't care for your muskets a fig:—and hark to this—get you down out of that yourself, unless you want a brick-bat for your supper!" Scarcely had she spoken the word when a shower of these missiles was discharged by the enraged populace directly into the little window, speedily and effectually putting to flight the zealous but timid magistrate.

"Now then, Mother Watch!" shouted the mob, seeing that her son had got clear over the adjoining buildings. "Now's your time!—Bear a-hand down, Mother Watch, bear a-hand down!"

"Hurrah, my hearties!" cried the dauntless old woman, quickly facing about towards us, and giving a loud cheer for the success of her daring exploit, as she waved her cocked-hat above her head; then, lifting up her pick-axe from beside her, and placing it over her shoulder, she beckoned with her hands to her subordinates to follow, and, rapidly slipping down over the ladder, was quickly lost in the crowd.

No sooner, however, was she missed by the troops from her exalted station, than a movement was made by them, as if to come down the lane to intercept her. This, however, the crowd rendered impossible, for, standing most firmly to their post, they completely wedged in the soldiers, until every one implicated had managed to escape; then, after three more hearty cheers, they as speedily began to separate.

After pausing to take a cursory glance at the rifled gaol, every prisoner of which had instantly availed himself of the unexpected liberation, Joe and myself proceeded quietly to our hotel, devoutly hoping by the way that Will had finished his escape as successfully as it was commenced. I could not help thinking, at the same time, how fortunate he had been in the presidency of a magistrate ignorant of the proper method of reading the Riot Act, and the presence of an officer who was too good a citizen to permit the firing of a single shot, under circumstances that would have converted lawful punishment into illegal slaughter.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“WELL, now, I wonder where Will can have gone to, sir,” said Joe, as we re-entered our apartment.

“Heaven knows, Joe!—Some shelter he certainly must have had in view, and this I suppose we shall be able to learn to-morrow.—Evidently the scene we have witnessed this evening was no ebullition of the moment, but a premeditated plan.”

“Ay, sir, and as daring a one as I ever saw!”

“True, Joe. I only hope it may not prove too daring to escape punishment.”

“Lor now, your honour, only to think of them old bathing-women going up there to pull a gaol down ‘stead of men; because, ye see, sir, the troops wouldn’t like to fire at them if the spree wasn’t over before they came.”

“Yes, yes, Joe, it was planned throughout; and Will evidently did not communicate it to me, because he thought I would rather be ignorant of the affair, provided it could succeed without my help—and that I could not have rendered.—At any rate we can be of no use to-night, nor indeed gain any intelligence till to-morrow; so go you down below, Royal—get your supper, and be off to bed.—For me, I am so utterly worn out, I feel as though I could sleep for a week. Don’t think of calling me, therefore, till noon to-morrow.”

Exactly as the clock struck twelve on the following day, the rough hand of Corporal Royal was laid on my shoulder.—Farther slumber, I now knew, was perfectly out of the question, when such a fidgety old fellow was within hail; so, arising on the instant, I inquired as to what news he had been able to obtain of Will Watch.

“No news but bad news,” replied the corporal, shaking his head.

“What, Royal!—You surely don’t mean to say he’s taken again?”

“No, I don’t mean to say he’s taken again just yet, sir; but I’m afraid it won’t be long before he will be though. Ye see, sir, they meant to have put off in the boats for France; but whether the king’s people had got an inkling of it or not, I can’t tell. However, there they were on the look-out; so Will and his people, with all the chief rioters, ye see, of last

night, were obliged to make for another port, and it seems they're now snugly quartered in some sort of cave, a mile or so to the westward of this, and poor old Mother Watch has joined co. with them since last night, they're blockaded up there."

"Well, well ; but come, Joe, they can't keep up the blockade so strictly but such a fellow as Watch will manage to break it somehow or other, and put off to sea!"

"Well, then, sir, I can tell ye this, he must look sharp about it if he does ; for they tell me that orders are given to carry him at once by storm, if he and his garrison don't come down out of that upon unconditional surrender. Now, I say, your honour, that such terms are nothing more than regular king's hard bargainers !—To a fellow, too, of the pluck of our Will !—why, ye sce, sir, no one who had any pretensions to be called a Christian, but what would let him march out at least with all the honours of war. Unconditional surrender!—a likely joke that a fellow's going to run his neck into a halter with his eyes open !—Why, 'tis treating brave men like a mere parcel of salvages!"

"And what say you, Joe ?" I continued, dressing myself as rapidly as possible. "Will he be able to make any stand, think you, till I can interfere to get better terms ?"

"Why, I'm sure I hardly know, your honour ; I haven't been down yet to reconnoitre Will's position, though I hear 'tis nigh as strong as our little Gibraltar, as you know we used to call Fort Mulgrave at Toolong."

"Poor fellow !" said I. "By my honour it is too bad, that such a heart should be baited to its den like a fox to its cover !—Let me have breakfast, Joe, for your life."

"'Tis ready in the next room."

"Thanks, Joe, thanks !—Now then, come on. We must be quick to-day if we would be useful. I fear, Joe, I have slept just five hours too late."

"Why, I thought once or twice of rousing you, sir, but your order—"

"Oh, Royal, Royal ! always rouse me for bad news.—Disasters can never be known too soon, because they can never be remedied too quickly :—good tilings, on the contrary, are good at any time!"

You may readily imagine, that, attached as I was to Watch, I was far too much excited to feel much appetite for breakfast

—the meal therefore detained me but a few minutes; and then I set off for the house of the mayor.

Here we were informed that this worthy functionary, accompanied by one or two neighbouring justices of the peace, had “gone down to the smugglers’ cave to apprehend Will Watch.” This information determined me, therefore, to speed after them with all the haste which Joe and myself could make. Having picked up a guide on the way, in twenty minutes we came to an embayment of the chalky cliff, on the opposite side of which, a deep and irregular chasm, seemingly half-filled with brambles, was pointed out as “West Cave;” while not far from the foot of the precipice, high up in the middle of which the cave was situated, I beheld, with a mixture of apprehension and surprise, a large body of troops.

At some short distance before me I observed a little group of officers, attended by one or two gentlemen in plain clothes, among the last of whom I distinctly recognised Sir Thomas. Knowing that any good I might be able to effect must be through these gentry, I pushed forward for them at once, scanning, as I walked along, the formidable approaches by which Nature had defended the smugglers’ cave. We were now walking on the shingle of a small bay, on one side of which the cliffs shot up in a perpendicular direction to the height of three or four hundred feet in some places, and of course less in others. In many parts also, the land jutted forward and receded irregularly, so as frequently to oppose its steep sides to the advance of the sea at high tide. The furthermost promontory, however, which terminated this bay, seemed to be the highest of these headlands, and as near as might be in its centre there vawned the dark and singular cavern of Will Watch. The cliff directly above seemed slightly to overhang this stronghold, and formed, with the intervention of a few jutting crags, nearly a straight line; therefore all hopes of storming the cave by descent from above seemed at once to be impracticable. Beneath this dark spot, however, large and various-shaped masses of the chalk lay piled one above another, in every grotesque form; being evidently the remains of those numerous portions of the cliff which had successively fallen year after year, until they presented a conformation similar to that of a huge and rugged pyramid cut in half, its base washed by the sea, and its apex terminating at the cave.

The very appearance of this place was enough to daunt the

boldness of a besieger, while its recesses afforded the utmost confidence to him who should determine to shelter himself within them.

“Now I tell ye what it is, Captain Arran,” said Joe as we walked along—“I tell ye what it is, sir,”—and the old soldier took another grave and scrutinizing glance—“there’s little Gibraltar over again; and worse too for the matter of that! Why, d’ye see, your honour, in such a cover as that, ‘tis impossible to say what may be its strength, or what not! Why, I’ll be bound, between those crags, sir, that lie there piled up a top of one another, from the sea to the cave, there’s space enough to hold near five hundred men; and, see to that, what a galling fire a few brave hearts may keep up on the storming party!—Hang me, sir, if Will hasn’t had his eyes awake when he chose such a place as this!”

“Joe, I fear we shall have to witness some awful work here, if they persist in their intention of driving him to extremities!—Here, however, are the men in authority; let us hear what they have to say to the matter,”—and accordingly, with Joe following at my heels, eager to hear all that passed, I walked up to the little knot before mentioned, every member of whom seemed as full of importance, as if they had formed part of Agamemnon’s council before Troy.

As Sir Thomas was the only individual present to whom I was known, I at once addressed myself to him; and, after some slight condolence on the unhappy events of the preceding evening, expressed my hopes, as one of the King’s officers, that the ends of justice might be attained without the loss of any valuable lives.—Sir Thomas, in reply, muttered something sufficiently unintelligible, and, with a shrug of the shoulders, referred me over to Colonel H **, who, he said, was “the chief-justice of the quorum, the commanding officer of the militia now drawn up beside us, and one as well qualified to take the lead on the bench as in the field, by his high talents and attainments.”—And so on *ad infinitum*—thought I, turning away in the centre of this panegyric, to look at the colonel. A single glance informed me that the worthy mayor was and would be a cipher in the great account, and, making my bow to the colonel, therefore, I expressed in a few words of common-place my regret at seeing the troops of my sovereign employed in so unpleasant a duty. The colonel, who was a pompous and austere but soldier-like looking man, eyed me

from top to toe with a somewhat supercilious glance, as much as to say, "who may you be, my young gentleman?"

I saw at once from the style of the man, that little could be made of him; and, I am sorry to say, that I was but too correct in this idea. The colonel was somewhat of a martinet.—He loved the service—he loved to show it.—He loved the laws—and loved putting them in force.—He loved himself, and loved to see his word the law of all around.—But, alas! the love of his fellow-creatures was one, among these numerous loves, but very little cultivated. All the arguments and entreaties I could use failed to change his view of the case. He only saw that the service was at all times bound to assist the law with a strong arm, whenever called upon. He only saw that the law had been grossly violated, and that he, Colonel H * *, was at the head of the quorum, and commanding officer of the troops, sadly zealous for his dignity as the former, and determined, as the latter, not to let slip an opportunity of distinction, which so rarely could occur to a militia colonel.—At the strength and resources of Will Watch, or the idea of being defeated himself, or even having his own men much cut up, he laughed in utter scorn; "and as for mercy to such rebellious scoundrels, they didn't deserve it." He said he had done his part in giving them a preparatory summons to surrender; that the boats of the district officer would take care of them by sea, and leave him to do the same by land; and that he now only waited the arrival of a couple of field-pieces from Highcliff to give the word for assault.—My feelings of anger and loathing and contempt at such narrow views would certainly have led me to express myself very warmly, when our discussion was interrupted by a flag of truce being sent in from the advanced out-posts of this precious besieging force. The colonel, who seemed to brook my interference with great difficulty, now hastily strode off, to hear what the messenger of "the rebels" had to say.

This, however, was very little, since the flag of truce was no other than old Mother Watch with a white handkerchief; and, as the good lady's forte lay more in deeds than words, she was for the present simply the bearer of a round-robin. This last was signed by eighty-five names: with none of which, however, was I acquainted, excepting those of Will Watch and Billy the Devil. The contents of this paper stated in brief terms the willingness of the smugglers to give up their cave, with all its contents, arms, and provisions, on condition that all the crew, except ten, should be allowed quietly to disperse;—

these ten being chosen by lot from among themselves to expiate the offences of the whole gang, by a service of seven years in the King's navy.—The colonel, having read this document, tore it in pieces, and, flinging the fragments in the face of the bearer, ordered her to be gone, and think herself very lucky that she was not taken into custody for her proceedings of last night ; adding, at the same time, that unless the whole of the smugglers delivered themselves up within the time specified, they should abide the consequences.

Determined not to stand by without making a last effort on the side of mercy, I first beckoned to the poor old woman to await the issue of the interference on which I was resolved, and once more set to work at the vain task of moving the colonel. Here, however, I failed ; but with Sir Thomas was more fortunate, and at last succeeded in convincing him, that it was imperative on him to transmit the proposal to the Home Secretary, and not take the responsibility of such a decision on his own shoulders. This line of argument succeeded, and the colonel, though reluctantly, was forced to come into this opinion ; but, judge of my consternation, when, thinking that I had procured for Will the respite of a night, and therefore the almost certain chance of his escape to sea, I now learnt that so far from allowing me to take the communication up to town—where I was almost sure I could have backed it with such influence as should have gained its acceptance—it was to be communicated and answered by telegraph ; and that the answer could not possibly be more than an hour in arriving, even if so much !

This I had wholly overlooked ; and, with the proposal left to its own merits, and the brief and imperfect, but exaggerated statement that would accompany it—to say nothing of the transactions of the preceding evening, which had doubtless been sent up to town by express—Will's fate I saw was sealed !—Help it, however, I could not,—let it be what it might.

CHAPTER XXIV.

You will readily believe that, after the scenes of distress through which I had recently gone, the loss of my esteemed old friend the Admiral, and the deplorable circumstances in which I had left Cornelia, this fresh blow, in the probable

catastrophe of Poor Will, did not affect me slightly. Almost without a hope that his terms would be accepted, I determined, in the mean time, to go up and see him; for I knew that, if blood were once drawn, he would defend himself to the last, and that with a degree of desperation little imagined by his relentless assailants. I thought, moreover, that together we might hit on some mode of subjection, which would still spare his life; or, if it must be confessed, some plan of escape of which he might yet avail himself. Anything rather than stand by and see my old friend and deliverer torn to pieces like a stag at bay. On communicating my intention to the colonel, I was told that I might please myself in holding any private communication with such people; that, doubtless, an "officer of my rank and discretion" was equally with himself a judge of what became the dignity of the service; that he must beg to decline any recognition of such proceedings; and, that, when the time came for giving the assault, for such, he doubted not, would be the orders of the Home Secretary, he should do his duty without delay. Allowing this impracticable personage, therefore, to understand, that the danger attendant on a particular duty could in nowise affect me in its execution, I turned round to Royal, and, giving him leave to follow me, requested poor old Mother Watch to show me the way.

The poor soul, during the time occupied by the discussion on her son's proposal, had been eyeing with a breaking heart the deadly preparations made for the destruction of her only son, to preserve whom she had gone through such dangers. She had been leaning with a dejected air against one of the many large fragments of chalk lying around us, her daring spirit evidently weighed down by the additional despondency which followed her excitement of the previous evening. Her arms were crossed on her breast, and the tears were slowly gathering in her eyes, as she watched the artillery-men just arrived from Highcliff, and now very busily employed in planting their cannon. Having touched her on the shoulder, and communicated my intention, she stared vacantly in my face for a few minutes; and, the motion of her head having caused the briny fluid to run over, she passed the ragged sleeve of her red coat across a cheek unused to such emotion for years. Taking my hand in her rough grasp, she replied, in the low choking tears of agony and despair, "God Almighty bless you, young sir!—tis the very thing that my poor Will was wishing for, only

somehow I hadn't the courage to ask it of ye, when I saw how they were turned against him. 'For,' says poor Will, just as I was coming off, 'if ye should see any chance of it, old 'oman, and the game's likely to go against us, I should like just to say good-bye again to poor Mr. Arran, before it's all up with me! I know that his is never the heart to say me no, if he can help it!' Ay, sir, and I'm glad you're just coming up to see us before we all die together, as it may be; for, ye see, sir, there's not much chance for anything better! For then—then, sir, if ye should ever chance to see our poor Fanny—.' The mother could no longer struggle against the pent-up tide within; she ceased to speak further than by the expression of an indistinct murmur; and, hanging down her head in shame and sorrow, tried to give vent to her anguish by the speed and strength with which she bounded over the rough rocks, rather than by such modes and expressions of her grief as were common to her nature and her sex.

We soon approached near the base of the huge mass, or '*ramp*,' as it is technically termed, which led to Will's retreat; but, before we had as yet begun to ascend, an orderly, sent by the colonel, came to tell Mother Watch that he should cause his bugle to be blown as soon as he received the answer by telegraph. If the notes of the bugle were followed by no other sound, they were to consider this was favourable to their proposition, and proceed to deliver up the ten culprits accordingly. If, on the contrary, the bugle-note was followed by the discharge of a gun, they were to receive it as a signal for taking them by force, unless they displayed, within ten minutes, some signal of submission.

"Go!" said the poor mother, when she had heard this summary and cruel message,—"Go, and tell the colonel, I only hope God will show him as much mercy as he shows to us!" Then, turning round once more, she resumed, in silence, the difficult and toilsome ascent. Had not some considerable time elapsed since the colonel had last served in the field, or had he even been as prudent as he was stern, his first object would have been to reconnoitre the stronghold he was so hastily bent on attacking. But he did not seem to have any one under him of either ability or determination sufficient to point out the tremendous difficulties of the undertaking on which they were resolved, or the total inadequacy of such a small body of troops to effect it.

“ Why, bless ye, sir! this is a ten times stronger place than ever I thought it was! ” said the corporal, in some surprise, when, after ten minutes’ scrambling over rocks and pools of water, that would have broken any troops in the world, we at length arrived before a perpendicular wall, as it were, of the chalk, some twenty or thirty feet in height. Behind us, in a little semicircle, rose the rocks, which completely shut us out from the view of the attacking party, and between us and the wall lay a tiny lake some fifteen yards across, half as many in depth, and about twice as many in length. It was formed by the flowing of the sea into a natural chasm, left by the cliff as it fell; and we could distinctly hear the gentle gurgling of the water to our right, reverberating along through the tortuous passage which communicated with the ocean; thus supplying this little reservoir with water, without allowing its calmness to be affected by the swell without. The sun, shining down over the rocks, which completely surrounded this little lock, lit up its white and shining bed in a manner truly beautiful to behold; while the depth of the water, seemingly even greater than it was, added a lovely tinge of blue, beautifully contrasted with the vivid hues of the orange-coloured star-fish, which, clinging to the rocks beneath, dotted, at intervals, the distant bottom. In one or two places the wild and stunted shrubs grew down close to the water-line, and the shadow of a couple of young ash trees was seen playing on its sparkling surface. The passage across was by a very slippery causeway, not more than a foot broad at the widest, and formed by the edges of some ponderous fragments of the cliff, which had fallen across the pool, almost in its centre. Altogether it was one of the loveliest little spots that, I think, I ever beheld; and, thus suddenly, brought before the eye, without notice or warning, seemed more like the fond dream of some warm imagination, than one of those many pieces of nature which the universal mother has scattered at random through this lovely world! — heedless alike, whether there is an eye to admire, or a foot to profane them.

Without staying to notice the surprise of honest Joe and myself, our guide proceeded hastily onwards along the dangerous causeway I have mentioned, leaving us to follow with difficulty. “ But, I say, dame, ” demanded the corporal, “ for what freak, I should like to know, are you taking us up to Will by this break-neck way? ”

“ Why, which way would you go? there’s no other!”
“ What, not round to the right there, directly in front of the cave, where the sea beats on the low point of this great heap of rubbish?”

“ Heap of rubbish did ye call it, corporal? Why ‘tisn’t far short of three hundred feet from the cave to the sea! It may look like a heap of rubbish at a distance, but when ye come to it, there’s scarcely a stone in it that doesn’t weigh from five to twenty tons! and the salt water stands ten and twelve feet deep between many of ‘em. No, no, there’s no getting up that way, ‘twould take the legs of seven-leagued Jack to do it. This stemmer”—pointing to the perpendicular face of chalk before us—“ runs the whole way round; ‘tis twice as high just in front, where you talk of getting up; and further round, towards Highcliff, it goes plump down, nigh eighty feet! —and such a surf at the bottom, as would beat anything in pieces, tho’ ‘twas as hard—ay, as hard as the heart of the old colonel out yonder! The cliff fell here, all of a lump, ye see, some fifty years agone or more, and so it has remained till now. No, no, this is the easiest way, tho’ this isn’t quite as handy as going up two pair of stairs.”

“ Pair of stairs, indeed! Why, old dame, now, you don’t mean to say that they militia-folk out there will have to defile through such a pass as this?” “ Ay, that must they, corporal, if they want Will Watch!” “ Then dame, I say, Will’s a precious fool if he lets them lay finger on him till he’s ready for it! Why, look ye there, sir!” exclaimed the corporal, in astonishment, “ if they haven’t got a couple of four-pounder ships’ swivels, flanking down upon the very centre of the pool Bravo, Will! I always said you were the boy for learning to do the thing cleverly—tho’ I *had* the teaching of ye!” “ Truly yes, Joe,” said I, looking up also, “ there they are, in truth, and little they promise for the safety or comfort of your militia friends below.” “ Come, your honour, don’t think to call them freinds of mine. I’ll hold out in this matter for Will till all’s blue; for he hasn’t had fair play shown him, first or last, tho’ he’ll give them a taste of it, I guess, before long; for if he doesn’t know how to make the most of a sharp pass, I’m not an old soldier!”

“ Ay, ay,” said poor Mother Watch, her grief still struggling with her utterance; “ Will’s all that you say, corporal, a finer son mother never had, or mother never lost! But do

you think that my poor Will will feel nothing when he and his men come to mow down them militia out there?—many of 'em townsfolk of me and mine for twenty years or more! 'No, no, corporal! Will's a better son than that comes to!—for if they once get to blows, there's many a mother besides Mother Watch will be sonless and husbandless, before the sun shines down in this blithesome pool again to-morrow! ay, or perhaps, for the matter of that, before he goes down over yonder hil'. You musn't be staying down here, if you want to see Will—but come on. As to grieving—if that would mend the matter, I know one whose heart should break or ever she was an hour older! 'Tis a wearisome life, but the best or the worst of us must learn to bear it! But no,—no!"—and, once more resuming her desponding murmur, our unhappy guide squeezed herself into what had originally been a cleft in the perpendicular rock, until the rude chisel of the smugglers had enlarged it into something like a door-way, and carved out within it a rugged flight of steps. From this we emerged into a narrow defile, overhung in every direction, and clothed with the wild verdure of the place—grass, samphire, bramble, and furze. By this route we were led, after a toilsome and circuitous ascent, to a narrow platform about half way up to the cave; which last, however, we could scarcely see, for the intervening ground and shrubs that towered above us.

Must a scene of carnage and destruction so soon deface this enchanting spot? thought I, as my eye wandered with a feeling of delight over the exquisite view sketched out beneath our feet. Elevated at that height, and on a footing scarcely secure, there was a fearful feeling of sublimity in gazing down on the diminished specks of the soldiery, busy in arranging their artillery, and going through the few manœuvres that were deemed necessary to keep their minds employed—their arms gleaming in the sun, and the curious but timid citizens flocking to behold from a distance those preparations, which their fears would not allow them more nearly to inspect. Before me, the brilliant cloudless sky seemed to be reflected in the bright and living mirror, which was dotted with the vigilant cruisers of the relentless foe. These met the charmed eye from below. From above us, our gaze was awed by the impending crag, which threatened every instant to bury the adventurous beholder, to whose apprehensive vision it appeared to do everything but fall; while its own lawful denizens, circling on airy wheel, clambered at the intru-

sion on their dread domain, as if foreboding the very vengeance which they imprecated. For a brief resting space we paused to gaze—but seemingly the same train of thought occupied each of the party; for, without the utterance of a word, or aught but a heavy sigh, we turned about, and recontinued the difficult ascent. After successfully gaining two similar platforms, as the falling heap seemed to have rested in ledges, and passing over ground the most broken and rugged that it is possible to imagine, we at length stood on a slip of chalk, so narrow, that two men could not stand on it abreast! above this, at a distance of twelve feet over our heads, was the cave of Will Watch. Mother Watch, who was on our left, gave a slight but peculiar call, which I heard, though I did not turn on the moment to notice it. When however I did so, I saw that some one in the cave had thrown down a little rope ladder, which she had hooked on to a couple of iron staples driven into the slip of chalk on which we stood. The old lady, touching my shoulder, made a motion with her hand for me to ascend. Just at this instant, however, I heard from below a voice which I knew, and, looking down, beheld, half hid in the brushwood, the figure of Will Watch. Deeply busied in preparing to receive the foe, he had but just caught a sight of us, and hastened up the steep, leaping from crag to crag, with an agility which bespoke him quite at home, choosing at the same time such little passes as completely secured his person from the view of those below.

For the first few moments, he pressed the hands of Roya and myself in silence, and then, as there died away upon his countenance the smile of joy excited by our appearance, he pointed to the sea view below, and said, “When I look yonder, sir, I often think of our sorrowful afternoon watches that we used to pass together in the fore-top of the slaver some five years back—we didn’t think then of this to-do, sir!” “No, alas, Will!” “No, sir, I couldn’t have believed I shou’d ever have been worse off! And yet we both have lived to see this day!” I could only reply to this by a sigh, for I saw whose image was uppermost on the mind of the distracted brother; and facing suddenly about, as though the very thought contained an adder’s sting to wound him, poor Will motioned in silence towards the mouth of the cave, into which we quickly ascended, followed by himself.

“ ‘Tis a rude place, sir,” said Will, as he strode past us, and

led the way. Since we had parted in the Downs, his figure had considerably filled out, both in bulk and height; and now, in the dim haze which here supplied the place of light, the noble proportions of his person seemed even greater than they really were. If the wonder of honest Joe and myself had been excited by the ascent below, that feeling was now increased tenfold, by the stronghold itself! and really, whether it was rather due to nature or art, I can scarcely even now decide. If you have never seen anything of this sort, you will scarcely credit what I am going to tell you of it; and were there not many similar caverns still in existence, on the same coast, it would be held to be a creation of the brain. We proceeded on a slight descent, some ten yards into the bowels of the rock, and there, the light completely failing, nothing was to be seen save the dull glimmering of some charcoal ashes near at hand; while numerous sounds and voices faintly heard around us, and the occasional yet distant flashings of a rude torch in various directions—now seemingly hid, and now revealed by the windings of the caverned recesses—proclaimed that we were in the midst of some vast space, inhabited by beings as little in unison with ourselves as their terrific dwelling with our domestic hearths.

“Where are you, sir?” said Joe, clutching me most firmly by the arm, while his voice betrayed a quaver, not usually heard in the tones of the old soldier.

“Wait a moment, corporal,” replied Will, “and don’t move, for the ground here is rugged, and my men are busy in all directions, and, may be, they mightn’t like to be stumbled over by a stranger. ‘Tis the last time, Captain Arran, you may ever have a chance of seeing Will Watch’s cave, so I’ll just get a light to give ye a glimpse of it, before the old place is dismantled; for let things go how they will, I suppose it will come to that!” As Will said this, we heard him move away with the careless step of one familiar with the place. The retreating footsteps gradually died away, and all was still—save the low sound of water, and the lengthened and heavy drip—drip—as drop after drop came sullenly down, apparently from a great height, and echoing over a wide space of water, which could not be far from our feet. I know not if ever you have experienced such a feeling, but I assure yon that each drop made me shudder!

“Why, where has that Will got to?” said Joe, drawing a

little closer—"This is an awesome sort of a place, and I 'll be hang'd if I half like being in it!"

"Certainly, Royal, this is not so pleasant an abode as a man might choose," I replied, attempting to move a little on one side. "Now do'nt move, Master Charles!—I say, don't go to move, before ye know where ye are, or you'll be going fifty feet down some break-neck hole or another before you can say Jack Murphy!—there's a precipice directly before us as it is! Don't ye hear the water dropping down into it?—I've got the ague from the rascally hole already, and if Master Will doesn't come back soon, I won't stay *here* much longer, I can tell him." Luckily, however, for my curiosity, we heard the voice of Watch very speedily, but he brought with him no light, save a faint spark which he appeared to carry in his hand. Without waiting for an explanation, the corporal began to abuse him lustily for this omission, declaring that he would'nt move another step without a torch; but to this Will paid no further attention, than by a good-natured admonition to hold his tongue, while we heard the young smuggler busying himself in some motion which we could not comprehend, until we beheld the spark which he had brought begin to ascend with great rapidity above our heads. I now conceived that he was hoisting some light to the top of the cavern, which I supposed would be at some ten or fifteen feet above our heads. However, as I watched the dot of fire—up—up it went—soaring aloft, unchecked by any impediment—its motion became less rapid—it grew fainter and fainter—scarcely distinguishable amid the impervious gloom, and finally was lost—"surely, Will, that has gone out?"—but no—I heard by the rapid movement of his arms, that he still hoisted away something aloft——"What!" I exclaimed, flinging out my arm at random, to grasp his, as a feeling of sudden horror came over me, accompanied by a vague sense of danger. A white and sudden blaze flashed forth above us, as if a thunder-cloud had pierced the cave with its annihilating fire—a glare too intensely livid to contemplate without actual pain, shot itself abroad over a gigantic space, which all its light was unable to illuminate—and there, at a height perfectly immeasurable to the eye, I beheld this monstrous cavern terminate in a yawning rent or fissure of the cliff, that seemed to soar up to the very surface of the earth. Around this gaping crack hung down immense stalactites of frightful magnitude and splendour, decomposing into all the

endless colours of the prism the vivid flare of the blue-light that had illumined them ; while the livid gleam, stealing down over the arched and rugged sides of the cave, displayed, near the top, pile upon pile of spirit-tubs, and was thence entirely lost in the vast expanse around, until it fell in one bright spot upon the dark waters before us, unceasingly encircled over by the everlasting drop, still falling from the roof, and causing an endless succession of circles receding far away into the blackest obscurity. Look where I would, distance seemed to have swallowed up every boundary, save that where burned the blue-light, at a height of certainly not less than ninety feet. Never had anything given me such an idea of indefinite space as this vast cavern. By the side of the Avernus thus gleaming at our feet, there stood the master-spirit of the scene—Will Watch. Even his form was shrunk to a pigny's size, though his spirit seemed, in our startled imagination, to have expanded into something not less colossal than his abode. It was the glance, the gleam of a moment—but it did not partake the less of sublimity for its short endurance!—In another instant, the blue-light had expired, and all was dark once more.

Were I to describe to you for a month, I could not give you a just idea of what my feelings were at the moment which followed that most unparalleled and magnificent display ! Certainly they partook more of horror than anything else. Watch, however, fully comprehended what they were, though neither of us gave utterance to a word. Still he had experienced them before himself, and, giving me his hand, led me away in silence to the right ; while Joe maintained his hold upon my shoulder, and mutely followed. After the lapse of a few minutes, vision began once more to return, though slowly, to my eyes ; and I perceived that we were in a sort of hollowed gallery, forming as it were a wing to the boundless abyss we had lately seen lit up ; while on our right-hand, numerous little holes, penetrating through the face of the cliff, admitted light and air. Here Will pointed out the sleeping cribs of his crew, as regularly arranged as it was possible to conceive ; row after row of little berths, nicely hollowed out of the chalk, with a few clothes in nearly all of them, and very comfortable mattresses in many. A similar gallery, Will informed us, was scooped out in the other wing of this subterranean abode, and there, as the cliff outside fell perpendicularly to the beach, they were in the

habit of hoisting up their tubs. But here also, where the roof in many places was not above thirty feet high, I could plainly perceive the same yawning fissure, which proclaimed the hand that Nature had in forming their fastness, and the reason there was to fear the stability of its tenure. At such a fear Will smiled—so completely will custom conquer even instinct. Returning towards the centre of the cavern by a circuitous route, Watch was in the midst of showing me his most ample magazines, when—the bugle sounded! At that note I thought I could observe an unusual tremor steal over his countenance, now pale and wan from long confinement, anxiety, and fatigue. And well it might; those sounds so carelessly blown were teeming with his fate! nor his alone—the fates of all of us were hanging on each note!

Trembling so that we could hardly follow Will's rapid step, we rushed at once to the mouth of the cave. Fancy how my heart sunk to its core, when, looking down, I beheld—puffed forth from the mouth of one of the cannon, a long white curl of smoke, followed by the sullen roar of a field-piece. Sound of sad omen!—Poor Will! for him on earth then was no mercy to be expected! I knew not that I had uttered the sentiment aloud, but it must have been so; for, ere the thought had passed before me, he had replied in accents too sadly altered from any I had ever heard before—“No, Captain Arran, none!—and none shall ever now be sought!” The eye, collapsed with previous apprehension, unfixed itself once more in stern determination. The head, which for a moment bowed, as if in anticipated repentance, was now thrown back in resolute defiance—and the blood remantling his worn cheek, he stood beside me seemingly strung for his last struggle. I turned away my eye, for I could not bear to look on such a form, and think what might be his fate. He reminded me of the many noble examples bequeathed to us by history, where adverse fate has found ready for destruction the victim it was never to vanquish!

“Well, Captain Arran,” said he, after a few moments, assuming a more cheerful tone, “‘tis time at any rate for you to be gone.” “But, tell me, Watch,” I replied, horrified at the rapid flight of time which had so imperceptibly slipped by, while I, forgetful of the main object of my ascending the ramp, had been idly examining his cavern—“tell me, are you

bent on opposing to the last? Think of the slaughter to which your determination will give rise! I cannot *recommend* you to give yourself up quietly, but, if your own reason shall approve of such a course, I pledge my word to you, I will risk all that is dear and sacred upon earth, rather than your life shall be sacrificed. That I can obtain this boon at the price of some more lenient penalty than death, I have scarcely the slightest doubt, but I confess to you it is the shadow of this doubt alone which deters me from advising you to the step!"

Watch looked down for a moment with a glance of fury at the troops below, but the fierce expression changed to the tender looks of apprehension and affection, as his eye caught the form of his poor mother, sitting forward on the most exposed point of the rough rocks below, her arms folded, as if in sad despair, upon her breast, and her gray hair gently lifted by the sea breeze from the shoulder knot of her old red coat. The cocked-hat, and her other singular accoutrements, made her distinctly visible among the chalky mass; but beside her, to my sorrow and surprise, stood a couple of muskets, and the glancing of the sun on something round her person showed me that she wore a belt stuck full of pistols. I watched the direction of Will's eye with hope—the thoughts of his parent being exposed to the slaughter of a rude soldiery I saw came home; but as he put out his hand and silently pressed mine, the agonized look which accompanied the action smote me indeed to the heart! Beckoning to us to follow, he rushed rather than leaped towards his mother. Though it indeed required the utmost care to take a single step with safety, I could not, for my life, take my glance off the unhappy pair below. Before Watch, however, had gained more than half way down to his parent, I observed a colour-sergeant step forward from the little line of the attacking party below, and, applying a speaking-trumpet to his lips, began to hail, "Will Watch, ahoy!"

"Soldiers, ho!" answered Will.

"The time allowed for your submission has expired," recommenced the sergeant, reading the words of the summons from a slip of paper. "If you surrender, display a white flag in answer to this summons; if not, your blood be upon your own heads!"

Starting to her feet, and mounting the point of rock, on which she had hitherto been sitting, so that she might be fully conspicuous to all, the mother sprang up on the instant to hurl

back defiance on the relentless persecutors of her son. “Go back!” she cried, shaking at the sergeant the long ducking-gun which her hand contained—“go back, you murder seeking slave, to your bloody-minded masters, and tell them that sooner than the head of Will Watch shall grace a gibbet, his own mother will pull a trigger at his ear! Take his blood how you will, or when you will, here I stand—and if there’s one among ye all, who can find it in his heart to fire at an old woman like me, there’s not a soger in your lines shall ever bear a better name than that of a cowardly villain!—though ye live for a hundred years! Don’t think, after that, to call yourselves Englishmen, for if ye do, the very sand under your feet will rise up and call ye liars in the face of it!”

“Mother, mother, come back!” cried Will, springing down the abrupt descent at the peril of his life, as he saw some movement taking place among the enemy’s guns—“Come back, I say!—Old woman, they’re going to fire!”—but the parent had surmounted every other feeling of nature in her breast, and with her form erect—voiceless and motionless—neither the creeping of a muscle, nor the slightest blanching of her striking countenance to be seen—she looked down with stern contempt upon the battery, where—to their honour be it spoken—not a private could be found to point a cannon at a woman’s breast!—The troops themselves, I could see, were hanging down their heads and shuffling out of the way; and the subordinate officers, on whom such a revolting duty had devolved, seemed vainly ordering them to execute their office.

A sudden motion was at this instant made among a group of officers in the rear, to their right, and while I was mutually wondering where this horrible scene would end, I distinctly beheld the stern old colonel rush from amongst his subordinates—seize the burning linstock from the hands of the artillerymen, and applying it first to one touch-hole and then to the other, the shower of round shot, cannister, and grape came whizzing and whistling on towards us!

Though we were all equally exposed, my eye naturally and instantaneously turned to see how this trying moment would be borne by one whose sex should have spared her from such a fearful ordeal—but no, had she formed part of the rock on which she stood, she could not have remained less moved!

“Stay, stay!” roared Watch, rushing to the point, almost frantic with the fond feelings thus dreadfully called into action.

The colour-sergeant, who was still below, and in the very act of returning within his lines, paused on the summons; and Will, seizing his mother by one arm, and attempting to drag her from her perilous stand, cried out in tones of entreaty and command—"Come down, old woman! I say, come down this instant! Will you make me murder you in this way before my eyes? Come down, and let me give myself up! The blood-hounds, when they have my life, will yet grant your pardon—and you may live, if not for yourself, at least for your poor little Fanny!"

"Fanny!" cried the excited mother, maintaining Watch at bay with her left arm, and keeping her right at liberty, with a degree of terrific strength, that I had not believed her to possess—"Fanny!—and shall I give up the first child of my bosom for her who's brought all this ruin and distress on him and me? *Fanny* is already gone, and though she came back to-morrow, shame must come back with her! but *you*, WILL!—*you* shall never die the death of a dog at any rate! What right have you to talk of giving away your life? Was it given you by yourself or me? and shall *you* dare to give away what's not yours, but *mine*?—was it for this, think ye, I got ye out of gaol?"

"Old woman, you are mad!" cried Will, snatching from her bosom, as a signal of submission, the flag of truce she had so lately borne; while at the same time he cried out in a tone of filial joy—"You *shall* be saved! and though you may despise pardon for—"

"Pardon? Down!" cried the mother, giving her child such a push with her left arm, as sent him sliding down the rock behind, where both himself and his signal of surrender were hid from sight: "Down! they shall never insult the poor old mother with the pardon they've refused the son!"

"Stop, stop, for the love of Heaven, stop!" frantically screamed Will, who, perceiving his mother's wild design, vainly endeavoured to scramble up to her to arrest her arm.

She heard the cry, but neither turned nor spoke to him who uttered it! Her long ducking-gun had with the quickness of lightning been levelled from her shoulder; her aim was taken; the flash, the roar, were seen and heard—the deadly ball sped on, and Will regained his mother's side, just as the unhappy colour-sergeant received it in his bosom!

With a convulsive sigh and start the wounded man placed

one hand upon his side, and vainly waved the other to his comrades; then, tottering two steps backward, fell from the little rock, which he too had mounted to be seen, into a shallow pool beneath, where the light blue waves, all sparkling in the sunbeams, soon rippled with a crimson hue upon the blood-stained body!

“Now then!” cried the mother, grounding her arms, and turning to her horror-struck son, with a voice and look in which I perceived all the wildness of the maniac,—“Now then, talk of pardon if you will!”

Watch lifted up his hands to heaven—then clutched them with the air of a man from whose mind misfortune had banished the last ray of promise or of hope. Suddenly, as if remembering the conduct which most became him in this awful extremity, he lifted his parent fairly in his arms, shrieked out “To cover for your lives!” and in another instant had borne the unhappy woman from our view.

Well it was he did so!—and well for Royal and myself that we obeyed the friendly hint thus given us—a universal shout, accompanied by the roar of cannon and of musketry, broke forth from the little camp of the beleaguerers; and the iron storm, which before had been purposely levelled too high to do any harm, now came rattling among us in earnest. Joe and myself, equally horrified and shocked at the tragedy so suddenly enacted beneath us, were protected by our crouching position; but from our cover I now caught a sight of Will Watch himself, peeping to observe the motions of the foe; at this instant a splinter of flint taking him on the cheek, inflicted a deep wound, which bled profusely. Stauching the blood with one hand, with the other he mutely pointed out to us a safer direction by which we could descend, while he led the way in person; but by a different part of the ramp from that by which we had ascended.

Although the shot were now falling fast and thick in every direction around us, still by keeping our heads bent down, and choosing sheltered paths, we managed to gain a rugged hollow, which I conceived to be near the beautiful pool which we had crossed with Mother Watch an hour before. Here, being entirely sheltered, Will halted, and as soon as we joined him, hastily pointed out to us a rude cavity, formed by the resting of one ledge of chalk on the other.

“This is the only place of safety, sir, for you and the cor-

poral," said he, as coherently as his dreadful state of agitation and excitement would permit; "'twill be quite out of the line of fire, and I hope you'll soon be able to get a chance of slipping safely away. God bless and preserve you, sir, for all you've ever done and hoped to do for me and mine! if I were free to-morrow, 'twould take the services of fifty lives to pay ye half I owe ye, sir, on that score. But—but—" Overcome with the emotions pressing on his mind, Will sat down for a minute on a rock beside him, and hid his face in his hands. The heaving breast and the smothered sigh that struggled from his bosom, alone bespoke how much he suffered. Suddenly the voices of his crew, calling on his name, were heard shouting above—and starting to his feet, as if that fatal sound recalled him back to life, he made a violent effort to be calm. "There is one favour, Captain Arran, if you'll do it for me—'tis the last I'll ever have to trouble you with!" said the poor fellow, trembling as he drew from his bosom a packet, which he placed in my hands. "Will," said I—but I could say no more—my old friend saw what was acting in my heart, and grasped my hand. "I knew you would, sir!" said he, "and if you should ever—if—if you should ever come across the poor little girl it belongs to, give it back to her, your honour—give it back to her;—and tell—her—tell her—I died—." Will's pallid lips quivered for an instant, and were silent. Griping the hand he held convulsively in his own for a few moments, with an averted face, he held out the other for poor Joe—then, breaking suddenly away from us, dashed up the rocks, and was lost to further view.

CHAPTER XXV.

"**T**HERE goes as kind and brave a heart as ever old Joe Royal loved or cared for!" mumbled the rough but feeling corporal, as the figure of Will Watch passed from our eyes. "Shame and misery befall the rascals that ever brought him to this pass!"—"Amen, Joe, say I, with all my soul. 'Tis hard, 'tis hard, indeed!"

"I don't know how your honour feels, but had he sucked from the same breast, I never could have thought more of him

than I have,—oh, but I hope he'll live to pay them out, and get ahead of this bout yet! What is it, sir, he's given ye?" I opened the unsealed paper in which the object of Will's regard was folded, and there was a long auburn lock of poor Fanny's beautiful hair!

"Hang me!" cried the corporal, striking his thigh with a sudden oath, "if I couldn't lay down now and cry like a child!" Poor old Joe! in saying he "could," he meant simply that he "should," for, taking a step in my rear, he rested himself on the stone which Will had lately quitted, and at once gave way to feelings that might have moved far sterner hearts than his or mine!

"Come, your honour!" said he, in a few minutes, rubbing his eyes with the cuff of his new black coat, "if any of those fellows should creep up here, and look in upon us, they'll be taking us for little better than a couple of fools, to be blubbering away here, and a rale smart action like this going on round about us! Can't we manage to have a peep at it somehow? Though we have parted from Will, he's neither shot nor taken prisoner yet! I know he'll show them a rare game, before they lay a finger on his shoulder. Come away here, sir. This seems a regular fox's hole; but if ye come to this end of it, there's a capital looplet where we may catch a sight of what's going on. As there's no chance of our getting clear of this, till the militia fellows have got past us up the ramp, we may as well look on and see the spree."

"Are the militia advancing, then?" I demanded in return, naturally feeling an intense interest in the sad scene now commencing, and finding myself intuitively drawn towards the cranny, whence the corporal in security was observing the movements below.

"Hush! hush! Captain Charles, don't speak so loud!" replied Joe; "the militia-folks have given over the musketry, though the artillery-boys are still blazing away in fine style!—there's lots of shot in their guns, as you may hear by the rattle they make on the rocks behind us; but I guess they hurt nothing else than the chalk." "Take care of your thick head, Master Corporal; I can see nothing but the pool, and, as for the troops advancing, I might as well look for the stars!" "Now gently, gently, Master Charles! you'd much better remain as you were—if you see the pool clearly, 'tis all you want to see! for all the best of it will be going on there

presently; and as to the advance of the troops, you'd do better to let an old soger like myself tell ye how it's made, for if ye come here, and see it yourself, you know you arn't so well up to military 'neuvres as old Joe Royal!"—"No—and the devil take his impudence for saying so!—However, you obstinate—." "Hush, now, Master Charles, don't I tell'e you'll be overheard?—just hark a moment, there, sir—can't ye hear the tramp of the enemy's line?—you'll see them presently debouching in upon the little causeway. 'Twill puzzle some of them I guess! But where's Will? What's he about? I haven't heard a word said on his side yet, though I'd swear by the sound of the single shots a minute since, that his fellows were picking off the Kentish men. Oh dear, dear, your honour! such a show they make! Strewed about over the rugged rocks!—enough to break the finest troops in the world! However, here they come! Will's keeping in his fire I suppose—not a shot going! Isn't it an awesome sort of stillness, sir?"

As Joe spoke the word, ten or a dozen men came rushing up the rocks in the direction in which they had observed us ascend an hour before, under the guidance of Mother Watch; and acting as a forlorn hope, the soldiers dashed headlong on, almost without observing where they were going, and hurrying one another forward. A sudden and tremendous plunge broke in upon the previous ominous silence, and announced that they had missed the causeway and were now struggling in the deep pool.

"Help—help!" screamed the poor struggling wretches, as many of them, who were unable to swim, sank down to rise no more.

"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah! my men; on for your lives!" shouted the subordinate officers, endeavouring to drown the cries of the sufferers as they called aloud to their troops to encourage them! "Back!—back a minute, steady!" returned the two or three, who had succeeded in crossing the causeway, but now found their further progress through the chasm checked by a heap of brushwood and rubbish! "Back! who cries back?" demanded the officer. "Onwards, my men, I say, for your lives! Hurrah!—onwards, and follow me!"—at the same moment springing on ahead, to show them the way, and passing the causeway with great difficulty • Hey there, the pioneers! pass the word for a pick-axe—pour

on, my men, pour on, and try the sides—forward, my brave lads, forward with the fascines! Here we have the column—one hearty cheer, boys, and mount away—now then, hurrah!"

"Hurrah!" was returned from the rocks above in such wild tones as bespoke no inanimate echo. This sudden burst from their secret foes, who had let them intrude thus far into their retreat, at once startled the assailants, and was in its effect redoubled by the command which followed—"Fire!"—At that single word, each bush, thorn, brake and cranny seemed obedient, and blazing forth far and wide with the fiercest fury, the resounding cliffs around rang shrilly with the ceaseless though intermitting fire. Every angle seemed to contain a little host of foes—screened from the dangers of retaliation—cool in their security, and unerring in their aim; scarcely a flash was seen upon the heights above, that was not followed by some death-shriek on the rocks below, as three and four at a time, thus released from their agonizing grasp, fell off from the clambering swarms, and left their gory tracks along the sharp chalky edges, over which they dashed themselves in their fall. Nor was this all: far better skilled, and more recently practised, in the murderous art of war than their opponents, the smugglers had only waited until this little impassable gorge was filled with their opponents, and these beyond the power of a safe retreat, when, at the word thus given, the light masking of some loose branches fell away from the two ship's guns commanding the inside of the pool; and then as fast as the troops came up, they were mowed down into its crimsoned waters. Soon, alas! to the narrow causeway of rock was added, on either side of it, a sufficiently spacious one of human corses; and further behind, on the close column of assault, three guns similarly situated committed even still greater havoc, and made it yet more dangerous to retreat than to advance!

Still the conduct of the soldiers under this tremendous fire was admirable. "Steady, my boys!" I heard the colonel shouting in stern but distinct tones, and in another moment he quitted the head of the assaulting column, now stationary between the two fires, and hurried forward to see what was the cause of delay. His eyes, however, had scarcely glanced upon the awful sight presented by the little pool, than he seemed horror-stricken at the unexpected carnage. Dashing

across the causeway, however, without regarding the still incessant and deadly hail, he inspected the removal of the rubbish in the chasm for a few minutes ; this finished, he ran back to hasten the coming up of the fascines, addressing a few brief sentences of encouragement to his men, as he went.

“ Now, then, forward once more !—the way’s all clear ! ” soon shouted the young officer who took the lead ! “ Hurrah ! ” responded the gallant fellows who followed and supported him ; and, pressing on with furious impetuosity alike over the dying and the dead, they rushed up the cleared chasm like the boiling springs of the Geysers—the more resistless from their long confinement. “ Now, then, my lads !—now for the smuggling villains ! Don’t leave as much flesh on their bones as might serve a hungry dog ! ” shouted the men, cheering each other on, with the utmost rage.

“ Ready, below ? ” demanded a cool clear voice, which I well knew to be that of Watch, despite of the bellowing roar that never slackened :—the answer I could not catch, but answer there must have been, since in another second the young smuggler thundered forth “ Let go ! ” In a moment, as if even the very rocks were obedient to his voice, an enormous rugged mass of chalk was seen to move from its elevated site about thirty feet above the pool ; and tumbling over and over—leap after leap—made one final and tremendous plunge right into the little chasm, up which the soldiers were now pressing. A terrific shriek, followed by the rushing back of the men, announced the fall of this dreadful missile, even when yet on its way ; but this was drowned in the strong concussion with which it came to the ground, when the piercing cries and groans that then arose were truly heart-rending.

“ Down with them ! down with every murderous mother’s son of them ! Give them as good as they thought to bring ! ‘ No more flesh on their bones than enough to feed a hungry dog ! ’ ” screamed a shrill voice, seemingly wound up almost to cracking by the frenzy that gave it utterance. I looked up to the quarter whence it came, and there beheld the fifteen or twenty soldiers, whom the fall of the rock had not crushed, resisting, to the last, with their bayonets at a charge, while the smugglers were bearing them sheer over the brow of the rock, by the force of superior strength, and headed by one whose cocked hat and red coat proclaimed her to be Mother Watch. Her long ducking-gun was grasped, by the barrel, in both

hands, and, with its heavy butt, dashing from right to left upon the heads of her opponents, her heart and arm seemed to contain the strength and fury of a tigress. Thus urged, some turned fairly round and took the frightful leap into the pool of blood below; others, less fortunate, were hurled headlong over; while a few, and but a very few, of the stoutest and hardiest succeeded in making a faint stand.

“Hurrah, hurrah! my gallant fellows above there!” shouted the old colonel to these last. “Hold but your own a minute longer, and the day is yours. Steady, and forward, for your lives! Try the fascines once more! break into skirmishing order the whole of ye—each man mount the pass he can climb the best. Now, men, once more forward to the rescue—forward or die! Hold on above, my gallant fellows, one minute more. Here we come. Forward, boys, forward! Hurrah!”

“Hurrah!” was instantaneously replied from above by Will Watch, who, springing from his concealment in person, followed by a dozen fresh hands, pushed for the support of his mother, to the point where the battle now raged thickest.

“Hold on! hold—hold your own, my men!” still cried the colonel, who had, himself, mounted one of the fascines, and had just planted his foot upon the little table-land, where his men were being momentarily cut down or driven over.

“Down, down with the hounds! back to their kennel with them!” replied Will, in himself a host, as he made but one spring, and dashed, with his whole force, against the colonel. The officer raised his sword to guard his head, and, formed of far finer steel than the weapon of his powerful antagonist, that of the latter shivered down to the hilt. This part of Will’s weapon, then, striking the colonel in the face, bore him backwards with tremendous force over the precipitous wall of rock, knocking down beneath him many of his own men. To seize a musket, and lay on all around him, was the work of an instant with Watch. Head after head of the assailants, as they appeared above the level of the rock, went down with the death-shriek of the sufferer, until the last of the intruders having been driven over, the smugglers cheered one another on with shouts and cries, flinging down on one side showers of flints and stones, while, on the other, the small but effective guns of Will’s masked battery continued to play at a distance that prevented a single discharge from being lost.

The fascines were now all of them cast down or cut away.

A straggler was here and there seen crawling half-way up the rugged rocks ; but it was the crawling of an expiring man, whose gore, trickling down behind him, ran to augment the sea of slaughter beneath. The pool was almost filled with the slain, and the cries of the smugglers, and the unslackening fire of their guns, plainly told with whom victory lay ; even had this not been revealed by the scattered fugitives, who were seen, at full speed, making the best of their way back to the spot where they had been originally drawn up, too many of them, alas ! dropping down on the road, between the rocks, and expiring of their wounds. Under these circumstances, no choice but retreat was left, and the colonel, whose fall had been so broken as to leave him comparatively uninjured, gave the word to those who yet remained behind him, and, forming his men into the best order he could, they precipitately made their way back to the lines they had so rashly quitted—quitted on an enterprise unknown in its dangers, most unmerciful in its plan, and unwise in its attempt.

In the meanwhile, there had lain Joe stretched out at full length beside me, with his chest upon the ground, rubbing his hands with glee at each fresh stroke of Will's good fortune, but, at the same time, expressing himself with the deepest commiseration for the poor creatures who had been thus terribly and unexpectedly slaughtered.

"I vote, sir," said Joe, "that we go up and see Will, and see how he's getting on ; we might be able, sir, to give him a hint or two, in case these fellows come back."

"A hint or two, Master Joe ! You strangely forget not only yourself but me : as it is, we are most awkwardly situated, and since, by our interference, we can bring about no possible good, or even stay, in the least degree, this lamentable blood-shed, I lay my strict commands upon you, that you do not attempt to open the least communication with Watch or any of his people—in the very act, as they are, of open defiance against the king's troops."

"Well, well, your honour, if you think that's right, it shall be so ; but whether or no, I may just sneak up out of this hole and see what the old colonel's about—wasting so much powder and shot ! He might have taken a lesson from Will—Will knows what ammunition's worth in a hard scratch, and keeps it for a better opportunity." But I pretended, however, not to hear this request of the corporal, who thereupon, taking my

hint as I had meant it, stole quietly away upon his own responsibility.

A long and weary half hour having elapsed, without the corporal's return, I began to fear that he might have been struck by one of the many shots which continued falling in every direction. Apprehensive, therefore, that he might be in want of assistance, I crept out from our place of shelter, and, proceeding along as cautiously as possible, commenced my search; accompanying it with an occasional call on the corporal's name, in the lowest tones. I soon, to my great relief, had the satisfaction of hearing myself answered by the inquiry, "Is that you, Master Charles?" Turning round, I beheld the wily Master Joe crouching down in pretty safe quarters, and directing on the beleaguered camp a small pocket telescope, which it was part of his duty to carry for my use.

"Well, you silly old fellow! you would disobey my orders, would you? I thought by your delay in returning, that you must have got your old head broken!" "Well, thank ye, sir, for coming out to bind it up; but though it isn't broken yet, it's like to be before the morning."

"Why, how now, corporal?"

"Why, look through here, sir: since I've left you, fresh troops have been marching down from the heights above; they seem bent on having poor Will, dead or alive, at any rate; for they've got down a couple of breaching guns—heavy metal, as you may see at a look; besides something or other they're very busy fixing in the midst of their little battery—I can't make it out for the life of me—What is it, sir?"

"Give the glass to me, Joe," said I, taking it from him to observe their movements; internally vexed at the lavish estimate of life thus unfeelingly displayed. A moment's glance along the besiegers' line but too truly convinced me of the truth of all that the corporal had asserted; and, in addition to all his bad news, I perceived that their artillerymen were busily employed in throwing up a temporary bed for a small mortar. On announcing this, the old fellow gave them his blessing in a manner peculiar to his class, and, resuming the little telescope, was fain to come to my conclusion.

"By jingo, I say, your honour! it won't be half so pleasant, looking on upon this sport, if them vermin are going to send us a circular," alluding to the arch described by the shell in the air.

“No, in truth, corporal, it will not! we shall be able to find no shelter from that species of annoyance, I fear, and so must simply trust to the chance that none will pitch alongside us.—Poor Watch! the day was when I little thought of seeing him thus harried to the last—I only hope that he may be as fully able to perceive their designs as we are; though if not, I feel it almost a point of honour that I should not interfere.”

“Why, as to that, Captain Arran, you may make yourself pretty easy, for 'twas only a minute after I left you that I had like to have got my brains blown out by the pistol of a young gallows-bird not fifteen years old. I met the young Turk skulking about here, among the rocks: however, I saw in a crack that he belonged to the crew aloft, so I called out to the young cockatrice to hold hard, as I was a friend of Will's; so then we had a parley, and out it came that the boy was on his way to the lines below there, to find out the enemy's movements, and take them back to his father—Billy the Devil they call him.”

“Ay, ay, my old file! and here he is come back!” said a voice at my elbow.

“Well, my young Trojan, what's the best news with you?” demanded the corporal.

“Best, did ye say?—there's none of that going,” replied the boy, fearlessly, sticking his arms akimbo. “We're all hands of us to be chopped up for lobschschowsh before long. There's this news for ye, that all those red herrings down yonder are coming up to be broiled presently, and I shouldn't think you'll be sorry for it, seeing you look rare and hungry. However, the colonel isn't to command the whole of them; there's some greater man than him coming,” replied the youngster, with a knowing look, as he recommenced his ascent to those who had despatched him. He had not proceeded far, however, when he suddenly stopped short, and pointing aloft, with his finger, to the top of the cliff, flung back to us a glance of caution and alarm; then, uttering an imitation of the shrill plover's note, was in the next instant hid from view.

I, whose mind had been filled by other images, had not been attending to him very strictly; but, fortunately, the corporal had made up for my neglect, and, catching the boy's meaning, suddenly pushed me down between the rocks where we stood, and there flung himself upon me. Not a little enraged, I was

on the point of demanding his meaning, in tones by no means gentle, when the chalk was dashed into my face from all directions, and something fell hopping about me, which I could by no means divine, until the clang of half-a-dozen muskets came ringing and reverberating down the cliff. Picking up one of the objects that had struck me, I perceived it was a flattened bullet. "Well, Royal, it's lucky these came tumbling on us at second-hand; they must have sent a party of their troops to the top of the cliff to fire down upon the ramp.

"Ay, ay, sir, that's been the way—and the Devil shake their skins for it say I!—we're regularly pinned in for it!"

In this most disagreeable state we had to remain for a considerable time, until the reddening rays of the setting sun proclaimed the approach of evening. During all this time the artillery below had been keeping up an unfailing fire upon all parts of the ramp, but chiefly upon the spot where Will had masked the two little batteries; to which were mainly owing the defeat of the troops in the last assault.

The troops, having formed an extended front of two deep, suddenly broke into pairs or skirmishing order as before, and, taking advantage of the broken ground, came rapidly on to the assault once more; above their heads there played the destructive stream of shot from their own artillery with redoubled roar. Together with these agents of destruction there came also a solitary shell from their little mortar; but it was at too great an elevation, and, falling considerably short, did more harm to its own party than to that of Watch. This in all probability was owing to the sinking of its bed, since its fire was not repeated.

In the dreadful pause which now ensued between the second starting of the troops from their lines, and the moment when they gained the point of attack, you may imagine the deep suspense that we endured, more especially since the number of the assailants had been considerably augmented.

"Now, Will, my boy!" exclaimed Royal, in an under tone of intense anxiety, unable for the soul of him—despite of his prejudices as a soldier—to take interest in anything but the fate of his old shipmate. "Now's the time for some new caper, Will! I know you have it ready for them.—I'll back ye, my lad, though 'tis ten hundred to one, 'tisn't one too many for one of the old Britons. I see what Will's at.—Lor, sir, he

won't condescend to wink an eye at them till he gets the lads jammed up on a clinch, as it may be, in the pool again—tho' 'tis more of a puddle than a pool now."

"Well, then, if that is his plan, now is the time to begin it," I replied, "since there they rush into the old spot."

"Ay, and there he begins, your Honour! Didn't I tell you so?" exclaimed Joe, rubbing his hands with glee, as a quick and destructive cannonade opened from the bottom of a little gully, higher up than the site of Will's former battery, and so situated that the artillery of his foes could not touch the men that worked it, while the muzzles of his guns still commanded the old point of attack. File after file of the troops were swept down with dreadful carnage, as they pressed forward to mount the rock by means of the fresh fascines which they once more bore along.

"Bravo, Will!" Joe continued to exclaim, in an under voice, as he witnessed this determined spirit of resistance. "Bravo, old shipmate, you've not been idle!—D'ye see, sir, he's dragged those guns up there, while we've been lying snug under hatches, as ye may say; and look round to the right, sir—there's another party there, with Billy the Devil at their head, firing up aloft at those ragaruches, who've spoilt my new hat, crape and all, and be hanged to them!—though the rascals might have let the mourning go, for the sake of the poor old admiral, God bless him! That's right—that's right, Billy!—you're the lad for my money! Give it to them!—there, they show a tail!—The vermin are only fit to fight behind a hedge—they can't stand a fair honest-hearted, good-natured fire!"

Mixed with the county militia, for the sake of giving them their powerful support, were intermingled a body of veteran soldiers, who, though baffled on every hand, and falling rapidly, still renewed their attempts as fast as they were defeated. In the new position which we had been forced to take up, we could only just catch a sight of their heads and gleaming weapons, as they thronged forward in massy groups to mount the perpendicular face of rock presented to them. Fast, however, as the fascines—their only means for accomplishing this end—were brought to bear, they were splintered into atoms by the ruthless and unfailing shower of shot and rugged flint stones, which continued to pour from the inaccessible guns of the smugglers. Still, however, they pressed on, and still they fell, until it seemed doubtful if they would ever be able to surmount

the point of attack, until the slaughter, that had already filled the pool beneath them, should form a pyramid of slain above, by which they might ascend.

Perceiving that they now began to waver, the old colonel dashed into the thickest of the fire, and, waving his sword, cried out, "Fifty guineas, my brave fellows, to the man who first mounts that battery! Face round to the left, some of ye, where the rocks seem lower. Now, stand to your arms coolly, my lads, and prepare to cover the assault as it's made—give them back fire for fire, my boys, they won't bear it long. So, bravely done!—once more!"—and the old colonel clapped his hands as some of his troops began to mount in a fresh place to the left, and the rest of their comrades discharged their volleys over-head at the smugglers who opposed them. "Hurrah, my lads!" he continued, seeing that this was likely to be successful. "Make but a good stand, and the day is for us! Front ranks, unfix your bayonets! drive them into the crannies of the rocks wherever you can find a hole for a pin's head! In with them bravely, now! Drive them in with the butts of your muskets, and then stand upon your bayonets, and mount away. Show these rascals that the gallant **th have stormed a worse breach than this before to-day! Bravo, my men! Bravo! that's the way! To it with a good heart! Cheer and mount! Cheer and mount! Hurrah, you're carrying all before you!"

Urged on by the energetic language and actions of the colonel, the men once more took heart, and, unfixing their bayonets as he had ordered, soon gave evidence by their progress of the admirable nature of the proposition.

As if one spirit alone animated both parties—these quickened their already continuous fire with shouts that vied with the roar of their guns, while those drove home their bayonets into the hearts of the solid yet yielding chalk, with clamours equally shrill. Mangled, though not disheartened, they seemed utterly to disregard the fiery hail that tore them out, or broke them off, scattering the destructive splinters on the inventors of the operation. Soon, however, a sufficient number of bayonets were driven in, and one of the junior officers, who had been most busy in fixing them, proposed to mount. "Now, then, my men," he cried, looking back for a moment to his troops, "follow me: hurrah! one cheer, and on, and the day's our own!" Clambering up the rock as he best might, by means of the iron steps thus formed, he was

followed by the soldiers pressing on, and fairly pushing him up the rock.

“Bravo! my gallant boy, bravo!” shouted the old colonel, waving his sword towards the young subaltern, who had thus taken the lead. “Follow him, men, follow him! now’s your time; forward and support your officer!”—“Forward, forward!” cried the gallant fellows, pushing on in swarms, with tumultuous cheers, and all the eager rage of battle, to execute the behest. In an instant the abrupt face of the rock, which had so long remained unassailable, at once exhibited a struggling crowd that undulated to and fro, as they were literally shouldered up in some places, and were in others clinging and clambering from point to point; while many of the soldiers were seen hammering in fresh bayonets at higher intervals, or presenting the still more horrid sight of bodies cut into atoms, dashed down and mangled in every form by the enemy’s unerring fire. But the great difficulty had now been surmounted, and though they fell in every quarter—still they mounted—still they cheered!

“Hurrah, hurrah, Gregory for ever!” shouted the old colonel as the subaltern still kept his hold. “Follow the gallant boy, my brave lads! follow, and support him—there he mounts: bravo, Gregory! another step, and you have it! On, after him, my brave men! On, and no pause. Don’t mind the fire, my gallant **th—one minute more, one minute more, and we have it our own way! Hurrah, Gregory! once more, and you have it—now—now then—only another step. So. Bravo! bravo! my dashing boy, you’ve won the day for us! Huzza! Now then, my lads, press on—up and after him. Bravely done! nobly done! Support him well, and all’s your own! As the colonel spoke these words, the young subaltern did indeed succeed in reaching the platform above. Waving his sword, and repeating the cries of his colonel, he was instantly followed by half a dozen of his soldiers. At this very moment we observed Will Watch, at the head of some twenty smugglers, dart down over the rocks, from the little gully before mentioned, and fling themselves into a two-gun battery, on an elevated part of the platform, on which the subaltern and his followers now stood. The guns, however, which he now sprang forward to work, had been already pointed, and scarcely was he seen jumping into the little work, when the flash of its artillery burst forth. Four of the successful party were

lying dead upon the ground—and one alone remained standing unhurt—it was the gallant young subaltern himself! Undismayed by this new danger, his weapon was once more gleaming above his head, beckoning his men to hurry up to him, while he enthusiastically called to them,

“On, my lads, before the rascals have time for another fire!” A sharp and sudden volley rang out from the rocks behind them. The eye involuntarily moved to the conspicuous figure of the young subaltern. The poor fellow was in the very act of darting forward, as the balls struck him; and his body had scarcely touched the bloody ground, when it was trodden under foot by his own men rushing forward to avenge his fall!

By this time, Will’s guns were again loaded—he paused till the living wave had dashed close up to the little mound. A sudden flash and roar proclaimed the discharge of the cannon, and while the rolling mass staggered beneath their murderous contents, Will’s smugglers suddenly started on their feet, and sped with inconceivable rapidity up the rugged rocks, yoking behind them their two light guns, which had been the object of capture and annoyance, and which were thus saved once more from the grasp of the soldiery.

“After them! after them! and no quarter to man, woman, or child!” yelled the enraged troops.

“There they go! There they fly! Hurrah! press on them. Forward at last, it’s all your own!” was the joyous shout raised on all hands, as the soldiers now thronged up to the platform, in large numbers, raising the shout of victory, and preparing to follow their far more nimble antagonists up the craggy ramp.

A shrill long whistle answered to the cheer from the hill above. A wide and universal flash quickly followed, and before the mind could comprehend half that passed before the eye—platform—battery—men—and rocks were whirled aloft to heaven!—mixed in irretrievable and indescribable confusion, and mingled in every quarter with the densest volumes of white curling smoke. No sooner was the dread canopy lifted by the breeze, than an awful sight presented itself to the startled eye. Here, where the solid upright face of the bloodily contested rock had so long stood, there now yawned a frightful chasm in the chalky ground—smoking in every direction—and blackened and besmirched with the fiery blast,

that had displaced its ponderous load from before the awe-struck gaze of the crouching soldiery! Scarcely was time given to behold the change, when down came the disjointed and falling heap, thundering to the ground with a fearful roar, while shriek on shriek were closely mingled, as numbers of the assailants bled to death beneath the jagged rocks that had thus crushed them. Above their heads, the echoes of the cliff re-multiplied the stunning report which the explosion made; though plainly distinguishable amid the din were heard the joyous shouts of the smugglers at the successful springing of their dreadful mine.

To this wild exulting the soldiers replied only by the groaning of the wounded; and for a few moments, their dense column wavered from side to side, horror-struck with the dreadful scenes that had passed before them, and utterly irresolute whether to proceed in their perilous undertaking or retreat. Now was the decisive crisis—a feather's weight might turn them either way, and now was to be seen and proved their leader's skill on either side.

“Fire away, my hearts of oak! Rise and fire!” shouted Will Watch from aloft, as he saw the urgency of the moment. His dauntless circle, springing up, once more poured in their terrific volleys, in addition to those of the gully battery, that seemed not to understand what a slackening fire was. The galled military wince^d, and shrank beneath the trying test, and in another moment would have been once more dispersed over the rugged rocks below, a scattered and a flying host. At this moment, however, the invincible old colonel's voice was heard. Again his sword was seen gleaming above his head, as, with reckless intrepidity, he scrambled down into the chasm smoking before him, and began his dangerous ascent on the other side, shouting to his men to follow him as he went, and crying, “Now, my gallant lads, the way is clear before you—never so fair a chance as this. Let him stand back who will,—cheer, and on once more: hurrah, then!”

This was decisive: without further thought or pause, on swept the eager and excited crowd behind him—dashing alike over every obstacle—the wreck of men—arms—and crumbled rocks.

“So, my lads, so, hurrah! The day's yours!” continued the old colonel, his hoarse voice rising into a shrill scream of exultation and of joy as he saw how heroically he was supported

“On to the left there, in the gully! Fifty guineas, remember, to the first man who mounts that work!” and the colonel, placing himself on a prominent point of the ravine, up which the troops were now in full storm, directed them, both by voice and gesture, to the attack.

The soldiers now felt the powerful influence of success: a dangerous and broken ascent, to be sure, lay before them, but up that ascent lay their prey—no steep inaccessible rock divided their puny numbers from the overwhelming swoop of those who longed to wreak on their proper heads the ample vengeance which such a fearful slaughter demanded. Already they seemed to grasp their subjugated necks, and cheered each other on with a wild savage glee, that bespoke how slight the mercy they contemplated showing to their enemies.

“On—on, my old gallant **th! This is the day that is all your own—up but a few yards higher, and you have the villains in their hiding holes!” still continued the colonel, as he saw his men, urged by the terrific excitement of the moment, almost make up for their previous want of practice; scrambling and vaulting over the trembling crags, that scarce supported their swarming numbers as they went—and well his men replied to all his cheers! They seemed as little accessible to fear, as the wily and determined foe that they pursued, and to whom we could hear Will incessantly crying, as the emergency demanded, “Now, my daring hearts—be true blue to the last!—up and show a nimble leg! Fire and give way—fire and give way!—bravo, my boys, bravo!—never could be better! So—a little higher, the quickest fire is the best! Now then, here we are at the loose ground, one hearty volley altogether, and up and round for your lives!”

Already their indomitable foes had gained half way up the ascent, leaving their gory track behind them dotted in every direction with the dying and the dead; when once more, up started the smugglers with their wild cries! But it was no longer to select the victims for their fatal aim.

“Now my hearts of oak!” cried Will, applying his vast strength to the round but pointed and ponderous rock behind which he stood—“One—two—three—and away—hurrah!”

“Hurrah!” again shouted his men, one and all imitating his example and replying to his voice—long before the unfortunate soldiers beneath could even divine what new device was about to be employed against them, much less escape its result.

Mass after mass, heap after heap, came hurtling, rolling and bounding down on their defenceless heads, crushing and mangling them over in every direction! Still they strove; some to dash aside beyond the rocky torrent, others to stem its frightful course; some few to rise again after its blows, but all in vain! The heap on which they clambered was composed of loose, powdery chalk, long acted on by wind and rain, till reduced to a crumbling state of decomposition, and it gave way to the touch or tread, even for many inches beneath the surface.

Yells — curses — screams and execrations of every stamp rose fearfully, mingled with the whizzing burr and roar of the continuous shower hurled down upon them from above. “Hurrah! there they go! they slip—they slide! Now’s the time; down with it right and left of every sort; down with it on them, let them have their own coin!” was heard ringing forth in the fearless tones of Watch, as his little and indefatigable crew were seen putting their backs and shoulders to large enormous crags of chalk and flint that came bounding and thundering down the abrupt descent with stunning sound and frightful velocity; each terrific stone loosening in its descent innumerable others of smaller size, until the whole ramp, up to the very spot where the smugglers stood, seemed moving with a general whirl.

“Now, then!—now, then, or never!” still cried Watch, seeing that his hour of retribution was come, and calling to his men to redouble their efforts. Nor did Will call in vain. Each man of his little band seemed to possess the strength of a giant on that day, and, applying it with all the fury of the hour to the almost inexhaustible means around, down plunged the stony torrent upon the foe, and rendered their last determined efforts nugatory and useless. Away they were swept before the stream with irresistible fury and destruction. For a moment, and a moment only, the confused heap of troops, rocks, shrubs, and even trees, paused as it reached the bottom of the clear but treacherous ascent that had proved so fatal; but the sudden shock with which it brought up against the larger but already unstable crags below, soon determined the result. After tottering and trembling a few brief seconds, everything gave way, augmenting the vast destruction it had temporarily arrested; and launching down the general ruin with an unearthly rumble, that shook the very ground, it came

rushing onwards in horrible destruction. The cries of man—at once the agent and the sufferer in the slaughter—were lost amid the greater roar, while the cliffs around echoed it from space to space. The very smugglers themselves seemed startled at the terrific power they had set in motion—and even pity for their ruthless invaders formed some part of their feelings, as, leaning in silence on their arms, they watched with distended eyeballs the sliding of this tremendous avalanche, as, gradually sinking down, it poured an indistinguishable chaos into the chasm so lately formed by the explosion of their mine.

Upwards of ten minutes or a quarter of an hour elapsed, before the clearing away of the clouds of dust thus driven into the air; and a still longer space ensued before there was the least cessation of the minor shower of flints and stones of all descriptions, which, thus loosened from their hold, followed in the rear of the great mass. When, at last, the eye was enabled once more to look up the ramp on which this awful struggle had taken place, it seemed as though some mighty earthquake had passed over it, or that Earth had arisen to war with her children, and swept them from her bosom. Look where the eye would, however, it could discover not the slightest trace of that desperate and daring band, at whose bidding all this sad havoc had arisen. Below, indeed, you could readily enough distinguish the now truly disheartened soldiers, shrinking back in fear towards the more secure position, where the awe-stricken reserve were still held together: these last were joined from time to time by such few of the late storming party as were still able to extricate themselves from the shocking heap that moved and undulated in horrid mockery of that revolting state and seeming contradiction—existence in the grave.

Dreadful groans of heart-rending agony now began to be heard; but these were mercifully drowned in the shrill rattle of the drums beating out a retreat. At this instant I observed the old colonel hastening towards his superior officer. But though he had once more narrowly escaped in person, still his distended eye and hueless cheek bore sufficient evidence of his feelings, at beholding his men thus terrifically annihilated. Indeed, so horrible had been the last scene of the tragedy, that even the distant guns of the besiegers had suddenly ceased playing; and as some space elapsed without their resuming their offensive operations, I naturally concluded that

this last check had proved to them the impossibility of forcibly taking a set of men possessed of such an impregnable position, so sadly skilled in all the arts of slaughter, and so firmly determined on resistance to the last. Still, if this were their determination, I could not conceive why they did not at once draw off their troops, and thus allow Will to disperse with his crew, instead of making the soldiers get to cover among the rocks at the base of the ramp, and consequently immediately around ; so near, in fact, that we could distinctly hear the talking and whispering of the privates and sentinels, after they had broken up from close column.

In the meanwhile, neither the corporal nor myself ventured to speak in tones above those of a whisper, lest we should be heard by the sentries ; for I felt—under existing circumstances —how awkward a discovery would prove, since we should then have been taken to the colonel, and have had to choose between rendering our assistance in capturing an old shipmate, or refusing our aid to the troops of the king.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHILE Royal and myself were mournfully engaged in whispering to one another our feelings on this occasion, the moon, with her bright and yellow orb, began to show herself above the horizon of the scarcely ruffled sea, and the solemn shadows of the gloaming, falling rapidly around us, ushered in the night. Succeeding the late and horrid tumult, a deep and touching silence now reigned over the little spot in which we were—a silence, broken only by the muttered challenge of the sentinels, the rippling of the tide as it plashed against the rocks to seaward, or the cautious but stumbling tread of an occasional orderly, in communication between the officers of the troops and the lines they had lately occupied below. If, raising our eyes from the lovely image of the moon, so exquisitely mirrored in the sea, we directed our glance up the ramp, lately rife with all the dread activity and shock of war, not a moving thing was to be seen. The new-born rays of the shining planet overhead had, as yet, scarcely acquired sufficient power to light up more than a rugged point of the chalk here

and there ; the rest lay in darkness. A solemn and mysterious repose seemed to have settled on the spot which we well knew to contain the desperate band of smugglers ; and if a low faint hum arose for a few seconds on the gentle night breeze that blew off the sea, it was as speedily borne away into the distance, leaving behind it the same undisturbed silence that had prevailed before. Occasionally a loosened stone would come rattling and bounding down ; but as soon as it had dashed itself upon the rocks, or into the water, the echo died away aloft, and all was still. Chaos seemed to have subsided into solitude—and the heart was willing to believe that this was peace. I never remember in my life to have been more moved by any contrast ; and filled with the many emotions of such an hour, the corporal and myself were engaged in watching the gradual rise of the moon above the azure bed from which she had so lately emerged. Not far, however, had she risen in the troubled sky, when she became hid among its numerous clouds, seemingly for a continuance, and the darkness was complete ; while I could not help taking it as a sad emblem of poor Will's fate, and, by the sadness of my heart, of mine.

“ Now then, your Honour,” whispered Royal, as he heard a slight movement among the troops ; “ you may depend they're going to make good their retreat while it's dark. And yet”—after a few minutes' pause—“ why, surely, Captain Charles, they're never going to try the ramp again, after all that's happened ! The poor blind fools ! but if they an't though, may I never be believed ! 'Tisn't very likely they'll do in the dark what they couldn't manage in the daylight. But hark !—there they go, sir—there they go, as sure as can be. But they haven't got on sure ground yet, as you may hear by the rattle—I only hope Will sees them, though he's as silent as if he didn't. Bravo, your Honour ! here's the moon peeping out again. You see the troops now, don't ye, sir ?”

“ Yes, yes, Joe, I see them plainly enough now,” I replied, my eye fixed on their dark forms stealing up the ramp with quick and guarded steps. “ Why, ay, sir,” returned Joe, “ so must he, but why does he keep so silent ? Look—quick, sir !—look up the cliff ! Why, what's that ? what can that be ? May old Joe be hanged if it doesn't look as like a boat, as ever boat looked like itself !”—“ And a boat it most surely is, filled with armed men,” said I, looking at it through my glass, and

distinctly perceiving what appeared to be a launch full of soldiers, slung in chains, and rapidly lowered down the overhanging steep.

As the corporal beheld this manœuvre, he grasped my arm with the force of a vice, and, pointing to it, exclaimed in an under voice as it swiftly descended through the air, "Lack-a-day!—lack-a-day, sir! It's all up with Will now! he'll be taken in front and rear both at once!"

Scarcely, however, had the words passed Joe's lips, when flash after flash burst forth from the numerous loop-holes communicating with the flanking galleries of the cavern; and as the shot poured in among the hostile crew of the descending launch, we could hear first the smothered groans of the poor wretches, and then, as the smugglers' fire became sharper, the unrestrained shrieks which their agony called forth; mixed, too, with the jeering of the besieged seamen, as they spirited one another on, as usual, to their deadly work; while plainly enough could be distinguished the voices of such soldiers as were not wounded, crying to those on the top of the cliff to lower them away still faster, in order that they might thus escape the murderous shower they could as little avoid as return.

In the meanwhile the troops below, now conceiving that further disguise was useless, gave three hearty cheers, and pushed on once more; and this despite of the stones and crags again hurled down by a few of Will's crew, and the still greater number which the tread of the foremost sent rolling down on those behind. They had now, however, become too much accustomed to the fearful work, to be lightly disheartened, and the old colonel, who led the way in person, took care to support their ardour to the utmost. Nor did the darkness indeed operate so much against them as Joe had anticipated; for though the capricious clouds had once more excluded the rays of the moon, still their path was every now and then illuminated by a glare, far more in unison with such a scene of havoc.

The mortar bed having been at length finally and securely repaired, now resumed its discharge, and line after line of light traced its terrific arc of fire in the sky, and formed the rainbow of the night.

Still the rumbling echoes of Will's cavern were heard ringing with the quick and almost incessant fire of musketry, that

kept a running blaze around the dark and fatal spot that marked out his domain. Still it flashed from the loop-holes of one wing, and then from those of the other, and still the soldiers in the boat commingled shouts and groans; these from the dying, and those from the unhurt. But the last were rapidly diminishing, and the cries of "Lower away," addressed to their companions aloft, became every instant more and more urgent, until the men appointed to this duty becoming alarmed at the terrific clamour beneath, began to let them down at a rate that promised not only to land them speedily on the top of the ramp they so anxiously desired to gain, but, what was much more likely, to dash them to pieces in the moment of their obtaining their desire.

Already the last shell that fell discovered them to be within some thirty feet of the coveted point, and descending amid the redoubled fire of the smugglers at a terrific rapidity, when --- *Whiz!* --- came another of the gleaming balls, distinctly casting its fiery glare on the faces of the suspended soldiery as it came along. "Lower — lower — lower!" cried the horror-stricken men, seeing that it threatened to pass with a raking effect directly through their boat from stem to stern. A sudden and terrific surge of the boat towards the ground was seen in obedience to the cry—onward roared the burning shell. It seemed to hold a moment's pause above the devoted launch—hissing forth its wrath—and by the light it thus flung down upon the shining arms of the warlike crew, we beheld the bow of the boat give a sudden plunge, like a bark going down at sea! Onward went the fatal missile, but, ere its circle was described, a shriek arose that seemed to freeze the very heart's blood. The sudden blaze of the bursting bomb threw forth its light—and then against the chalky cliff was seen the empty boat hanging perpendicularly by its stern;—its bow-chain severed, and the daring but unhappy soldiers dashed to atoms on the rocks beneath!

A sudden halt seemed instinctively to take place among the ascending troops, as they beheld the issue of this attempt; while the smugglers, ever ready to improve their advantages, rushed from their cavern with renewed exultation, and once more resumed, with all their numbers, the destructive shower of rocks and stones which had already proved so irresistible. Watch was not long, however, allowed to use this stratagem. No sooner did the Royalist officers perceive that all hopes of attacking their

party in the rear were at an end, and that they were consequently reduced to their old position, than they immediately ordered the retreat to be beat once more, as an assurance to the determined crew above, that the design of storming was for a second time abandoned.

No sooner did the drums rattle out the well-known sound, than the poor fellows, disheartened and wounded, once more descended from their desperate undertaking; while Watch, either from motives of compassion, or the policy of not idly expending his means, gave orders to his men to cease their rocky shower; and betaking themselves once more to their cover, comparative silence stole over the contested spot.

Though the struggle had thus terminated in favour of the smugglers, still, as the observant corporal remarked, the troops had at least this advantage, that the main body of their storming party had now dispersed and sought individual cover, at a spot considerably higher than that which they had last chosen. This, to be sure, looked but poorly for the hope which had once more arisen in our bosoms, that the capture of Will's little crew would yet be abandoned in despair. Trusting, therefore, that the struggle was now pretty fairly brought to a close, and that the present position of the military had been taken up simply for the purpose of keeping a stricter blockade of the cavern until the morning, it was unanimously agreed by the parties most interested, namely, Royal and myself, that we should avail ourselves of this seemingly the most favourable opportunity of effecting our escape. With this wise intention, we began moving our position to the left, but soon found that a small body of men were still posted in reserve outside the site of the late little pool, on which rested a chain of picquets, completely surrounding the base of the ramp. That we had not sufficient dexterity to pass these various sentinels without observation, was quite evident; we therefore sheltered our heads in the best hole we could find, and determined to postpone further progress till a more favourable moment.

After watching and wishing for some considerable time, the corporal fell fast asleep, and, worn out by all I had undergone, it was not long before reality was displaced by its counterfeit in my mind also. How long I might have been permitted to slumber I know not, but I remember feeling not a little annoyed at having my repose disturbed by the rough and heavy hand of Royal being laid on my shoulder, while the corporal at the

same moment demanded, in an under tone, “I say, master Charles!—don’t you feel precious hungry this fine morning?” For a few moments I could remember nothing; but the first glance at the clear and deep-blue heaven above brought back all the horrid remembrances of the previous night.

“Yes, Joe—Joe—my good fellow, you are right!—I *do* feel precious hungry! But you need not thus have aroused me to a sense of my misfortunes when you can offer me nothing to allay them!”—and, as I spoke, my attention was startlingly arrested by a little face peeping over Joe’s shoulder, and peering into our retreat. Having pointed towards it in silence, the corporal suddenly turned round. His first idea had certainly some reference to the supernatural, by the sudden start he gave; but another glance convinced him that he merely beheld our young friend, the son of Billy the Devil. In the faint twilight of morning, I could just distinguish the boy putting his fingers to his lips, with a suspicious side-glance, as much as to say we are overheard, while the hopeful and beaming looks, so natural to youth, had all fled his striking countenance, and in their stead were now only to be seen the traces of apprehension and exhaustion.

“Bravo, my little hearty!” kindly whispered old Joe, squeezing the youngster’s hand. “How goes the game aloft, lad? Have the brave boys been able to make clean off yet?” The little fellow mournfully shook his head, whispered some short sentence in the corporal’s ear, and making a sign for us to be on our guard, returned the pressure of Joe’s hand, and in another instant was out of sight.

“What did he say, corporal?” I demanded.

“Bad luck to the rogues, Master Charles!—he said that ever since the last assault, there’s been a gang of sappers and miners hard at work on the top of the cliff, making a sort of subterranean to open a communication with the back of Will’s cave; for there’s a queer sort of passage it seems, which runs up nigh to the surface, just over that awesome piece of water—as you may remember. They’ll have Will in the rear yet, sir, you may take your oath of it. I don’t know how sailors may stand to fight against such odds, but soldiers can’t abide that sort of thing! And that young Bantam says, poor little soul! that they’ve well nigh finished this precious piece of work up aloft, and that they’ll fall to it, hammer and tongs, again presently. For ye see, sir, now that they’ve lost so many

men and gone so far, the king's officers have made their minds up to burn out poor Will and his crew, like wasps from a hive, before they give it over!"

At this moment, the long-silent battery of the beleaguering party opened fire from within their lines, and high over our heads were once more seen the overarching balls of fire that whirled hissing onwards, at quick intervals, and fell just outside the cavern. This then was the signal for the co-operation of the soldiers themselves, whose muffled tread we now heard once more ascending the ramp from their places of late concealment, closely followed by the body that had hitherto acted as a reserve.

The heavy sound of the cannon was now succeeded by quick volleys of musketry, reverberating sharply through the innumerable hollows of the cavern, while the fitful glare seen at its mouth but too plainly proved that its indomitable crew were disputing its possession inch by inch. As it was only the very slightest indication of morning's light that could yet be distinguished, this fiercely-glowing spot was all that indicated the object of their aim to the artillerymen who plied the mortar. But even this was more than they had possessed since the setting in of the previous night; and now, re-adjusting the elevation of their bomb, shell after shell came rushing through the air with startling quickness and fearful grandeur. The troops, on the other hand, though such a considerable number had already fallen, still pressed on with an impetuosity that seemed rather to increase than to diminish after every defeat, while plainly distinguishable was heard the voice of the old colonel, in seeming confidence that he had at last compassed the certain destruction of the once despised foe, that had already cost him so dear.

For a considerable time, little or no opposition seemed to be offered, and though the soldiery had not yet re-attained the loose ground, whence their comrades had been so awfully hurled back in the assault before the last, still as each moment slipped away, and gave them the opportunity of advancing step by step, unimpeded, their bosoms seemed to glow with the more certain presentiment of speedy success. Their savage and threatening eyeballs were now furiously directed upwards to that one bright spot, bursting forth every instant with a lurid gleam amid the surrounding darkness, and displaying the volumes of dense smoke which rushed eddying out of its rag-

ged entrance. In strong relief against this fierce glare were seen, darting backwards and forwards, those rude and gigantic forms bent on defying their enemies to the last.

Still, however, not the slightest resistance was made to the progress of the troops, and we could distinctly hear the words of their determined leader, as he called to those who followed him : “ A quick step, lads—a quick step—every moment is worth a life!—Don’t start at your own shells, but on, my boys, before you are opposed!” To this the hardy fellows replied with a general voice, and an accelerated pace, and in another instant stood at the bottom of the loose ground.—“ Now, my gallant **th,” cried the colonel, “ try the sides, and leave the middle free. Those in the rear, halt, and give the front ranks the cover of their musketry—fire up the ramp wherever the rascals dare to show their noses ; now then, my lads, start and away !”

At this instant, the firing in the cavern was again heard and seen, but it was for an instant only ; and the scene relapsing into its former darkness, no light save that of the hissing shells, illumined the dreadful struggle ; while its sad notes of death and slaughter were slowly borne down the ramp.

“ The lights ! —the lights !” we suddenly heard shouted in the voice of Watch, who now perceived that the storming party continued to gain upon him. Scarcely had he spoken the word, when innumerable little sparkling fires marked out the circle held by the smugglers, above the troops.

“ Now, my men ! now’s your time for a fair mark—there they are—fire !” cried the colonel, pointing up to these small objects with his ruddy blade.

“ *Ay, fire!*” was returned in a still deeper tone, and repeated by one shrill voice whose shriek could never be mistaken. Down were hurled the sparks that but the moment before were seen glimmering above ; but no sooner had they fallen among the soldiery, than a sudden and portentous gleam shot forth in every direction, blazing up towards heaven with its tall and deep-red flames, and throwing its light far and wide adown the fearful scene, where numbers of the unhappy troops, covered with this liquid fire, were rushing to and fro like distracted madmen, struggling in vain beneath their fearful torture, and uttering shrieks and cries that scarcely seemed to be of this world.

Above this dreadful spectacle intervened a space of entire

darkness, from which flashed forth the renewed discharge of musketry, which the smugglers now poured on the foe, so completely exposed to view; while beyond them again, the white surface of the beetling cliff lifted itself up to an awful height, made doubly distinguishable by the ruddy blaze that it reflected.

At this terrific juncture, when the scales of victory hung on an even poise, redoubled shouts and firing burst forth from the recesses of the cave—once more arose the never-failing cry of the old colonel, and though quickly and loudly answered by the cheers of Watch, and his still more effective discharge, both of his fiery compound, and his volleying musketry, still it was too plainly to be seen that the soldiers added slowly but surely, to the ascent that they had already gained; while the concentric fire of the smugglers gradually circled up towards the cavern's mouth. One more determined and deadly effort they made on the brow of a small rising platform, on which Royal and myself had paused in our ascent—stones—shot—fire—came hurtling down upon the assailants, and now one cry prevailed, and now another, but by slow degrees the troops seemed to gain the brow of this contested spot. The sounds of Will's musketry, though not less sharp and quick, seemed fewer in number, and his defence evidently began to cost him dear in men.

The shells and shot of the battery below now fell even more fast and thick around him, and the former were often bursting out in the very shadow which we knew to contain his men, while the ground growing more firm and verdurous towards its junction with the cliff, presented less advantages for defence, less missiles for the crushing of his foe, and, worse than all, a steadier footing for their advance. One more concentrated fire we saw him pour down on his eager pursuers, accompanied with a deafening cheer, and the next, after the lapse of a few seconds, flashing forth from a compact little spot in the centre of the cliff, convinced me that he had securely gained his cavern, with the surviving remnant of his truly dauntless band.

“Royal, I will not see the last act of this fatal tragedy!” said I, clasping my hands before my eyes, and turning to move away. “Scarcely a sentinel now remains around the bottom of this fatal hill: we never can have a fairer opportunity of

quitting this hateful scene, and whatever may be the issue of this conflict, we shall be but too sure to hear of it."

"Ay, sir—no fear of that!" said poor Joe, in a voice husky with true sorrow and despair for the fate of our old shipmate; and without uttering another word, or giving any sign of his emotion, otherwise than by a mournful shake of the head, the poor old fellow entered readily enough into my feelings, and offering me his arm on which to lean, we walked rapidly away towards the lines so lately occupied by the troops. The utter downfall of our hopes seemed to have quenched all the loquacity of the good old corporal—he spoke not a word, seemingly as completely disgusted as myself with the wholesale slaughter which we had quitted: and this in despite of that inherent affection for 'the glorious art,' which under other circumstances would have led him to anything, rather than the abandonment of a contest he had thus anxiously watched from stage to stage.

We had hardly however proceeded beyond what might be called the precincts of Will's fastness, when the redoubled Babel of firing, shouts, cries, and screams that struggled down to our ear, and thundered along the reverberating cliffs above, caused the corporal to come to a dead halt. Facing about once more he suddenly exclaimed,—"Why, surely, Master Charles, Will can't be going to win the day after all!"—"What!" said I, turning sharp round also, and looking upwards to the murderous spot round which the carnage and the battle had now thickened—"No, surely, Joe, that can hardly be!" Startled by a remark so contrary to all the sorrowful images on which I had been pondering, and my interest excited anew by all I had witnessed, I now found my gaze again riveted on that awful point, where the roar and flash of death succeeded one another in awful continuance.

"What do you make Will out to be doing now, sir?" demanded Royal, who saw me applying to my telescope once more. "Doing, Royal? everything that the most desperate courage can suggest—he seems to have found some means of blocking up the lower half of the small entrance to that wild hold of his, and to have planted it with all his guns, in such a position that they bear almost perpendicularly down upon the soldiers beneath, while his ladder having been drawn up, there the troops remain at a dead stand!" "Don't they mount, sir?"

“ How can they mount an abrupt height, as smooth as my hand? Had they been bred on the sea instead of on the land, they could scarcely have accomplished such a feat, without any other means than their own limbs! ” “ But their bayonets, your honour!—don’t they seem to be using them? ” “ Yes, as far as I can make it out, they are; but then they are as instantly dashed down and killed—Watch is playing down upon them both with musketry and great guns in continued fire. I see no other mode of deciding the day, if it is not to belong to the party that can stand the longest. By every flash from Will’s cavern, I can see the poor wretches of soldiers rolling down the ramp in groups, but their fierce fire must soon exterminate the fragment of Will’s men.”

“ Why, yes, Master Charles, I fear it will; but then he has that port-fire of his.”

“ Yes, to be sure, they hurl that forth with ceaseless fury. It must be a terrific compound, and seems to burn every soul on whom it falls! ”

“ Why, what can it be made of, Master Charles? ”

“ Pitch and tar, and gunpowder, I suppose, Royal, mixed with spirits, for there is no lack of that in the cavern. If you remember, we observed it piled keg upon keg.”

“ Ay, ay, sir, that must be it, true enough.”

“ Look—look, Royal,” said I, as fresh volumes came pouring down, “ there it actually goes half way down the very ramp.”

“ Ay, your honour, and watch them poor creatures that that stuff falls upon, running and shrieking about: may I never be believed, if there an’t some of them tossing themselves down head foremost, and others rolling their poor bodies on the ground, to put out the flames. Lor, sir! but ‘tis an awesome sight. They look more like old Nick’s people, ramping about up there, than honest men and women’s children. Will, Will, my poor boy! you must have been sorely put to it, before your soft heart would have let any such a devilmint be flung on any Christian body—even though it had been only a poor nigger, or an old dog! But what can all that rumbling be inside the cave, Master Charles? They surely can’t have made an entrance fairly into it from behind, or they’d have turned Will’s rear before now. What can those fellows be up to, I wonder? ”

“ No—no, sir, they haven’t got in yet,” replied a voice at our

side. With a sudden start of surprise, I turned and beheld one of the artillery-men, who had heard the question as he was loitering near us; for his battery being now of no avail, the gunners had most of them clambered up the ramp, to see "the fun," as they termed it, while he was left in charge.

"Then what, in the name of fortune, my good friend, is all that firing?" I demanded.

"Why, sir," answered the man, "I hear they've managed to find an entrance into the cavern from above, but they can't send any men down through it, for the end of the passage is right over a steep pit of a place, filled with water some sixty or seventy feet below: so some of the men say, though I can't believe it is so much as that. However, sir, the most they can do, is to lower down barrels of sulphur and powder, and try to smoke the rascals out; but even this they've a great work to do, as the smugglers have got some galleries that command the very place where the sappers are at work, and won't let them have an inch of ground without paying hard for it. When I was up there last, though they were going to lower down some fresh combustibles, and chain them half way; for the smugglers had set a dozen ankers of brandy and pitch a-fire at the bottom of the passage, and the wind, ye see, sir, was forcing it up right in the faces of our men, like the blast of a furnace."

"But, why chain the combustibles half way?"

"Because our shot can't come at their pitch barrels, and as we've got no water up there to put them out, all we can do is to blast them away."

"Why, then, in point of fact, the sappers are as far from obtaining a footing in the cavern as ever?"

"Why, yes, sir; but if the colonel can't storm that bit of a hole, when he's got right up to it, he can't expect us to do everything!"—and the artillery-man, with a shrug of the shoulder, pointed once more to the little focus where the last throes of this deadly conflict had drawn to a head.

Rapidly the soldiers now seemed to diminish, before the still continued fire of Will; nor could the party of the last have failed to suffer from the tremendous discharges which replied to his defence. There yet, however, seemed considerable hope for the young smuggler, if he could only maintain his hold for such a brief space longer, as would complete the rout of the already wavering soldiery; whose most eager efforts still left

them where they were—exactly beneath that spot, the continued blaze of which was only dotted with the dark figures of the combatants.

For a moment I thought I could perceive a tall stout figure, surmounted by the cocked-hat which marked out the distracted mother, amid the very hottest of the fight that was to decide the destinies of her son. But this might have been thought alone. The apparition flashed before my eyes, and then again was lost. Will, I could distinguish nowhere, though doubtless he must have been present with his men ; and while I was yet trying to pick him out from among the Patagonians so busy in the work of slaughter and defence, a sudden startling light burst forth over sea and sky, and gave the brief blaze of noon-day to the little bay around ; while almost at the same moment an awful and tremendous blast issued forth from the rugged mouth of the cavern, so long lit up by the fire of both parties. Before its terrific breath was whirled like chaff upon the wind, a mingled mass of many objects—darkling in the fierce and ruddy glow, like missiles from the mouth of some vast and overloaded bomb. A long line of light darted upwards above the cliff, like the fire of an extended line, flanking each wing of the cavern. The cave itself—the ramp—the rocks—the very promontory of which they were but parts, seemed instinct with life and motion, as if heaved forward by the last tremendous struggles of its imprisoned Titans, while the very earth trembled beneath us.

“ It falls—it falls ! ”—shrieked Royal—utterly bewildered at the dread spectacle, and folding me in such a suffocating clasp that I could scarcely breathe.

The beetling precipice, heaved thus forward from its bed, now tottered for a few brief seconds, as if undecided in its fall. A deep and frightful chasm already yawned behind it, while the besiegers, who but an instant before were pressing forward in an eager swarm, now, at the imminent risk of life and limb, leaped, dashed and ran down the steep ramp in the wildest confusion and dismay ! Shrieks the most harrowing that ever pierced the ears of man, rose fearfully on high, as the gigantic mass of solid mountain, urged far beyond its poise, came thundering to the sea, with a sight and sound that mocked the din of armies or the shock of battle. Broken into a thousand fragments by its fall, and sweeping and hurling everything before it, the shattered cliff roared onward

till it met the waves. The furious waters of the last were now dashed on high into one solid jet of foam, and seemed to emulate in height the fallen mound that had so long and so lately held them at resistless bay: even the solid ground beneath our feet rose and fell like the sister element that had beat upon its bed for centuries! Echo after echo now seemed to take up their everlasting note. Fall after fall was heard reverberating along the cliffs, around and above us, and there we stood, in momentary apprehension of being added to the dreadful number of the victims, by the concussion shaking down some of the adjacent rocks upon our heads. Slowly, and with a terrible suspense, the din gradually died away into the far distance of either side, and there lay before us the tremendous ruin we had just seen wrought! There perished friend and foe in one vast grave!

The calm and lovely light of a summer's morning was now breaking sweetly in the east, behind those hideous masses, piled up in all the wild irregularity and confusion that often mark the work of Ruin's hand. Strangely terrible indeed was that morning's scene! Flickering here and there upon the shadowy side of this reeking heap was seen to play the fitful gleam of the dying spirit, so lately used as a means of destruction between two parties, whose quarrel was thus hushed—whose summons to their last tribunal was thus awfully conveyed! On the side of the main land from whence this vast point had been thus rudely blasted, the same fiery parasite displayed itself, darting up and down, as the gentle and refreshing breeze of morning fanned the flames, and helped them to lap up the spirituous compound that had been so lavished around; while distinctly traceable by its blackened print upon the chalky cliffs were seen the vast and wandering outlines of that cavern, disputed even to their final and expiring gasp, by the unvanquished followers of WILL WATCH!

CHAPTER XXVII.

“**THERE**, Master Charles, is the melancholy place!” said the soft-hearted Joe Royal, as we drove rapidly away from Highcliff, on our return to the “Folly.” The hardy soldier's voice quavered as it gave these few words utterance. Scrub-

bing the corner of his eye with one hand, the other pointed from the carriage window to the shattered mass appearing far away in the distance.

“ Ay, sir,” he continued, as he found that I replied not, “ this sweet summer-time will pass along, and the winter’s sea will soon be beating about those fresh lumps, till they grow as green as the ramp lying under them ; but the storm may howl there long enough, before it sings to sleep a heart as kind and soft as Will’s was once ! And poor little Fanny ! if ever she lives to hear o’ this sad day !——” the completion of the sentence choked all utterance, and breaking off with an oath into another train of thought, all he could exclaim for some moments was—“ The villain !—the deep—cold-blooded villain ! Do you know, Captain Charles,” he resumed after a pause, “ even now, after all we have seen, I can’t help hoping, sometimes, that Will wasn’t buried there with the rest of ‘em. I know ‘tis foolish, and that like, to think ‘twas ever possible he should have escaped, but when your honour was writing out that disposition for the magistrates, I went back to the cave—and a ghastly sight it was ! For though I’ve seen a power of blood and wounds, and rack and ruin, of one kind and another, in my day, I never saw the like of that ! There were hundreds of the country folks standing some way off, afraid to go nearer, and only two or three upon the heap itself—tossed ! bless ye, sir, more like breakers in a strong current running against a head-wind, than hard chalk and flint ; and smudged and smeared with pitch and tar and powder in all directions ! And such a sight here and there peeping out between the great heavy blocks !—’twill make my teeth chatter and my heart ache for many a sad day to come, I know ! However, ye sec, sir, there had been a party of pioneers at work on it from Highcliff, digging up what they could, though to be sure that was little enough, and they’d come upon the hat of poor old Mother Watch, and something very like the poor old creature herself, and the colonel too, I believe, and Billy the Devil, and one or two others, but nothing that said a word of our poor Will. For my part, sir, I can’t make out the rights of such a catastrophe, as your honour calls it. It must have been some bungle of the sappers and miners trying to blast poor Will out of his crib. I’m very sure, sir, ‘twas never the work of Will’s own hand, and that’s what makes me hope he may turn up yet. I know it’s wrong to hope

for such a thing, sir, seeing how unreasonable-like it is, and all that, but still——.” Joe’s gaze was once more fixed upon the fatal point, the view of which we were rapidly losing as we whirled along.

I would have spoken to the poor old fellow, but could only clasp his hand. Who in the wide world was now left to me—save the unhappy but adored Cornelia, and the humble, faithful friend who sat beside me?—and was it with such a desolated bosom that I now found myself in sudden possession of that post-rank I had so eagerly coveted? Bitter, bitter was the accompaniment! It was indeed the “*candida rosa nata in dura spina!*” But not all the charms of the flower could atone for the lacerating of the cruel thorns!

“Go you out to the ‘Folly,’ Royal, and prepare everything for my arrival,” said I, as our carriage on the ensuing evening approached the town of Portsmouth:—“it will not be long before I join you there, but it will be better that I visit my ship on the way; she must be ready for sea by this time.”

“Then you will come out and sleep at the ‘Folly’ to-night, sir, as soon as you come back from the craft?”

“Yes, Joe, I will:—do you in the meantime collect any letters that may have arrived for me, and learn whether any inquiries have been made during the sad four days which we have been absent.”

“Four, days your honour!” repeated Royal. “Well, and is it no more? I never could have believed, Captain Charles, that so many hearts could have been broken in so short a time, if I hadn’t seen it!” The old fellow pulled the check-string as he spoke these words, and with a sigh that acknowledged the mournful truth of his observation, I got out, and saw him driven off to prepare for my occupation the fantastic mansion that had for ever lost its greatest charm! On inquiring for my ship, I found that she had gone out of harbour two days before, and was now riding at Spithead in daily expectation of being sent to sea. This determined me to go out to her, and on reaching the little vessel that owned me for her captain, I found a water-lighter alongside, and the crew busily employed in hoisting in the casks.

Seeing that my approach was unobserved, the whim crossed me of taking my subordinates by surprise. Discharging my boatman, therefore, I boarded the lighter and was thence walking up the side, when I felt a most unceremonious pull

at my coat-tail, and a hoarse voice brawling out from behind, “Heigho, youngster!—who the devil are you?”

“Why, truth to say, I hardly know, but you’d better ask the first lieutenant,” I replied, looking round, and seeing that my progress was arrested by the brawny arm of one whose appearance bespoke him in my mind to be the master.

“Hey, there, Fenton!” continued this gentle individual, calling to the first lieutenant. “What now?” replied the latter officer, popping his head over the hammock, and then suddenly and deferentially taking off his hat with a most horrified look, as he beheld the mistake—a faint exclamation from behind followed my instantaneous release.

“Are you satisfied, sir?” I demanded, turning round; but the mistaken master had quickly jumped out of sight, and, smiling at his blunder, I got on board; musing at the same moment on the strange inconsistency of the human heart, that, even in the very hour that it is most oppressed with grief, can give way to such tomfoolery as this.

The water having been quickly hoisted in from the lighter, the ship’s company went to supper, and the first lieutenant, having reported to me the various steps he had taken and the arrangements he had made, asked whether I would not like to go round and see the ship.—Expressing my pleasure on this head, I mechanically accompanied him, and, though my thoughts were wandering far away from the scene around us, I could not help extolling the excellent management so evident in every quarter. The first lieutenant was an old officer, appointed to my ship, I suppose, for the kind purpose of taking care of his young captain: he had, however, noticed the air of abstraction so visible in my manner, and was, I saw, disappointed at it. He set it down, I suppose, to the utter indifference of a youngster, who cared for nothing else about his ship, save the rank it brought him.

“My kind friend,” said I, taking his hand, after returning with him to my cabin, where all my directions for its fittings had been most carefully followed up; “had the *Rapid* been twelve months in commission, instead of a few weeks, she would still have been a credit to you. Accept my thanks then for the attention which has more than supplied my absence.—I congratulate myself on the chance that has brought us together, and hope that it may prove equally advantageous to both. You must excuse my not seeming to enter more into the spirit

of what is going on around me, for I am fatigued with a long journey." As I said this, I rang for coffee; after which I requested he would man my boat.

"Our orders for sailing, then, are expected to arrive daily?" said I to myself, commenting on the replies given by Featon to various inquiries which I had made, pacing up and down the cabin.—"Will Royal have found at the 'Folly' any further letters from Cornelia? I should think not.—Her last was forwarded to me at Highcliff, and she now, then, only waits for my suggesting the plan of our union. In truth, there is not a moment for me to lose.—The circumstances in which she is involved, are imperative.—A private marriage is the only remedy that can save her from the fangs of the remorseless crew surrounding her.—Yet how will it be possible to keep such a fact secret without an injury to her?—If such be the step to which we resort, I shall have to give up my ship at any rate—and yet will not such a union, so shortly after the poor admiral's death, be construed into disrespect to his memory?—He would not think so, and, Heaven be my witness, how far is such a thought from my bosom!—I will act as I think he would have dictated, and save the happiness of one who has so often been the happiness of both him and—"

A brief tap on the cabin-door interrupted my reverie.—In another moment it was unceremoniously thrust open, and, to my utter amazement, in walked Corporal Royal.

The disarray of travelling was still visible in the corporal's dress, and haste and anxiety evident in his countenance, as he mutely ushered forward some individual whom I was scarcely able to recognise.—Yet, surely I knew that tall thin figure—another glance—fancy my astonishment, when I beheld the Earl of * * !

Bowing to his lordship, and handing him a chair, I waited some explanation of this extraordinary interview—but the motion of the boat had made my visitor so faint, that he seemed unable to speak.—Looking from him to Royal for some *éclaircissement*, the corporal began with a terrified look,—"My lord—Captain Charles"—and stopped short.

"—Captain Arran, can I believe him?" commenced his lordship.

"—On the word of a soldier, your lordship can," interrupted Royal, and again paused.

"On what head, my lord?" I demanded.

"Are you not privy, Captain Arran, to my daughter's elopement?"

"What!"

"My daughter—"

"Well, my lord."

"Now be cool, Captain Charles!" again interposed the corporal.—"Poor Miss Cornelia——"

"——What of her? speak, my lord,—speak, Royal, I conjure you!" said I, sinking into a chair, trembling and speechless.

"He's innocent!—he's innocent!—She's gone!—she's lost?" was all the earl could say. Withdrawing the scrutinizing gaze he had hitherto so fiercely fixed on me, and hiding his face in his hands, he stamped upon the deck with the anguish of a madman, and fell back insensible into the arms of Royal.

"Corporal, is this true?" said I, unable to move, and scarcely able to behold the poor old fellow I addressed. Royal shook his head, and, without further reply, rang vehemently for the cabin-door sentry and servants to bring some brandy.

—But why describe any further the scene that took place. Could I but eternally banish it from my memory, and with it the sad host of images which it calls up, I might yet be resigned, if not happy!—But it is in vain!—

—The earl recovered, but it could scarcely be called reason to which he returned; and, now raving on me—now on Cornelia—and now on the countess, was put into a cot in a state of delirium.

Nor could I boast of being myself much better, when I learnt from the examination of Lord * * 's confidential servant, that Cornelia, accompanied by her waiting-woman, had left his lordship's house on the evening of the day before: that her elopement had only been discovered at eight o'clock, when the family were on the point of sitting down to dinner; and that, on searching her apartments, the only clue to her flight, was given by some fragments of paper, which had been torn and thrown on the floor. These, on being picked up and put together, were found to be wanting in the most essential parts, though they had evidently been the calculations for some journey. The only points of route, however, that could be made out, were, "Isle of Wight"—"Spain." On the strength of this vague direction, his lordship had immediately started in pursuit; his thoughts turned on me as the aggressor, by the

countess. This supposition was unfortunately confirmed by his not finding me at the 'Folly.' Thither he had dispatched a horseman to ascertain the fact. The report that I had gone to Highcliff, he believed to have been thrown out as a blind. So far, however, he had been fortunate—that he succeeded in tracking the fugitives to Ryde, whence, at five o'clock in the morning of this very day, they had changed horses, and hastened across the island to a little spot, called Packaster Cove. Here they had immediately embarked on board a small schooner, which arrived the night before, and which, according to common report, was a privateer. A boat, it was ascertained, had been in waiting to take on board the fleeing party, who were said to consist of two ladies and a gentleman. The privateer had no sooner received her passengers, than she immediately got under weigh, and, while in the act of doing so, hailed a fishing-boat at anchor near her, and desired him to take on shore one of the female passengers who had just come off. This last personage, from the circumstance of her speaking broken English and being described as a foreigner, was supposed by the earl's servant to be no other than Cornelia's waiting-woman. Of her, little more was known than that she had driven off in the post-chaise that brought them to the Cove; dismissed it at Ryde, and thence taken boat to Portsmouth: so that whether she still remained in the town, or had gone back to London, it was utterly impossible to say. As for the privateer, within ten minutes of her receiving her passengers on board she was under a heavy press of canvas and running down channel before the fresh and favourable breeze. One horrid fact remained, but whether even to believe its truth, or how to interpret it, if true, I knew not. Some faint sounds, as of a female in distress and screaming for assistance, were said to have been heard proceeding from the privateer, soon after the fishermen had shoved off from alongside with the foreign lady. But this I could not—I would not believe. It seemed too horrible, even to let such an opinion flash across me for an instant!

What was to be done?—did I move?—did I breathe?—was I to believe that this sad tale was not some frightful conjuration of a mind already too heavily oppressed by scenes, and deeds, and thoughts of horror? Dream if it was—it was one from whose excruciating torment I could not awake! What was to be done? Every moment lost might be fraught with dan-

gers to **Cornelia**—. Even to glance at this was maddening!—Some deep villainy was at work; but for any clue to it, I in vain racked my brain, as I paced up and down my cabin. That **Cornelia** had eloped with another and proved false, I would not for an instant credit—and yet—and yet—I knew not what to believe—all was doubt, confusion, and dismay! Pursuit—pursuit alone remained for me! But a few minutes since I was debating whether I should not resign my ship, and now it seemed the only hope that was left me!

My resolve was taken; I would procure my orders, and, if the hints obtained in town were correct, they would lead me in the very path of those I was most anxious to follow. An aim once marked out, and some relief was afforded. Lord **, still within a cot, was hoisted over the side into my boat; officers were dispatched on shore to hurry off the few individuals who happened to be out of the ship on short leave of absence, and, having directed the first-lieutenant to get everything ready for sailing within the hour, I hurried away with Royal, and my unhappy visitor; sending the latter out to the ‘Folly’ with the corporal, who was directed to leave everything at the command of his lordship’s servant, and to bring back with the utmost expedition the few necessaries which he knew I should want for sailing. With these he was to meet me at the Sally Port landing-place, having previously taken care to send for the late admiral’s surgeon, and give him strict charge of the invalid.

Assuming as much outward tranquillity as was possible for one so utterly distracted, I presented myself before the port-admiral. What answers I might have made to his questions I know not—I could only hear that my hopes were confirmed, that my sailing orders had preceded my arrival at Portsmouth by two hours, and that I was at liberty to depart for the fleet off Cadiz as quickly as I pleased. My superior, evidently perceiving the distress of mind under which I laboured, imagined, I suppose, that it arose from some circumstances connected with my thus suddenly starting to sea, and, kindly stretching his authority, offered to allow of my remaining at Spithead, until another post had arrived from London. But, alas! the indulgence which would have proved so acceptable to most men going on a foreign station, was now none to me! Taking my leave as quickly as possible, I waited the return of

Royal at the landing-place, and then shoving off, bid my men give way to the ship as rapidly as they could.

Every one having been got on board, except one unfortunate midshipman who had broken his leave, I did not scruple to run the anchor at once to the bows, and, showing all my cloth to the breeze, got safely through the Needles by the moonlight of a fine summer's evening, and was soon at sea once more.

One image alone remained before me—reflected as it was in a thousand different and hideous shades—still it was of the same parentage, marked with the same lineaments, and those of unmixed horror.

On we went, still the breeze continuing, and still my hope surviving each sad day of fruitless chase. Still the sails pressed and heaped on upon the complaining spars of my new vessel, and recourse had to every artifice of trimming, both below and aloft, for the purpose of increasing her speed. From the very hour in which we started, I never left the deck, but watched, and watched in vain, for the appearance of that sail, the capture of which was now my only hope !

Of course various rumours got afloat on board the little vessel, and these, through poor Joe, often reached my ear. But I heeded them not, and whether my extravagance in thus pressing on was set down to insanity or grief mattered but little to one, the sum of whose earthly happiness was set upon a cast !

My sole occupation by night or day was in sweeping the horizon with my glass, and diverging occasionally from my course, as one sail more suspicious and likely than another hove in sight. But it was all useless ! I had no sooner made my offing from the channel to leeward of Brest, than I hauled up on the larboard tack, and, standing in towards the land, skirted along the shores of the Bay of Biscay. Innumerable were the various vessels we met, but few answered the description of her I sought. At last, after boarding two or three schooners in vain, the coast of France was changed for that of Spain, and my feverish eyes were turned towards its rugged shores at the base of the Pyrenees, with an agonizing and feverish distraction that mocked at all but feeling !

Despair and madness were fast gaining ground upon me, and I already thought of the dreadful alternative that would await me, should I arrive off Cape Ortegal without obtaining

a sight of the prey I sought. I must then either abandon Cornelia to her fate, and proceed in execution of my orders to join Earl St. Vincent off Cadiz, or, by returning to the search, break through these, and abandon everything in the service for a pursuit that might after all prove fruitless. My bosom was torn amid contending emotions! Now I blamed myself as having started without sufficient information on the errand of a fool, and now impugned my sloth that had not allowed me to start before. One course prevailed to be succeeded only by another; but to abandon her!—*abandon her!* no, never!

Seizing my glass in my hand, I hastened to the masthead once more to sweep the horizon, while, as I hurried up, some fiendish voice seemed whispering in my ear the dread advice of casting myself down into the sparkling wave beneath, and thus at once ending all my sorrows! The hour had but just past noon, and the people were at their dinner, when I gained the crosstrees. With a faint and deadened heart I plied my unceasing task. I had been employed thus for about ten minutes, when Royal, who in my affliction followed me about like a child, and was now standing just below me on the rigging—directed my attention to a small speck on our larboard beam. Directing my glass towards the object pointed out, I discovered that the old fellow's sharp eyes had not been deceived. It was evidently a sail entering some small and land-locked harbour. For suddenly, in an instant, it became lost to the sight of both of us. A long debate now followed as to the propriety of closing with the land, and endeavouring to get another sight of the stranger. It might, to be sure, prove nothing more than one of the fruit-vessels of the country, and our altering our course would only be a loss of time. Then, on the contrary, it was just possible that it might be the object of our search. To this opinion, vague and preposterous as it seemed, I was moreover inclined by the slight shade of suspicion which seemed to attach to the stranger for having thus eluded our pursuit; though at the same time, the fact of our presence might never have been noticed by those on board her; still a nameless something at my heart seemed to assure me that my fate was bound up in that of the obscure stranger.

Having speedily taken with the compass the bearings of the spot where the chase was last seen, the crowd of studding sails came quickly in, and the ship, being hauled close upon

the wind, stood on, in as direct a course for the spot as possible. In lieu of the dreadful vacuum that had before crushed every energy of my mind, I now felt an elateness of spirit to which I had long been a stranger ; and, though accompanied with no slight sense of impending danger, I welcomed to my bosom any sensation, however desperate, which seemed to announce the crisis of my fate. The course of the sloop having been altered, the ship's company were now hurried below to finish their meal, while we stretched in for the land. As this, however, was a part of the coast of which we knew comparatively little, the master busied himself in consulting the charts and ordering the lead-lines to be got in readiness for sounding, while I, with renovated hopes, announced to the first lieutenant my intention of cutting out the strange craft if necessary : ordering him at all events to get the boats ready for boarding and examining her as soon as the ship should have approached as near to the shore as her safety would permit. Anxious, however, as I was, and totally absorbed in one feeling, I still determined to keep a good offing ; for some suspicious appearances which had been observed to landward during the day, together with a fall of the glass, indicated a change of the weather. Amid all the alacrity with which the news of a cutting-out expedition is ever received, I could still mark in the features of the first lieutenant no small surprise at my proceedings. To him they must doubtless have seemed altogether without precedent or meaning. Taking him aside, therefore, I communicated as much of the true facts as I thought proper ; and, stating my intention of taking the command in person, gave him the necessary instructions as to the safety of the ship, and the steps I wished him to take, in case I fell.

The presence of some tangible object of danger had so far recalled my faculties as to leave me cool, and I therefore mentioned the circumstance to him as a matter of course ; though I little thought that something very like such an hypothesis might soon be realised. The dinner-time having elapsed, the hands were turned up, the boats armed and stored with the few necessaries wanted, and then dropped astern, until, by repeated tacks, we had approached within a sufficient distance of the shore. This object, however, we were not long in accomplishing, and our glasses soon enabled us to discern the thin masts of the little vessel we so anxiously

sought. We now beheld them shooting up from among the steep and rugged rocks that lined the shore, while the hull itself remained hid from our view. We were not long in deciding that she was a two-masted vessel; but whether a schooner or brig, we could not yet affirm. It was, however, sufficiently evident that the object of our pursuit was lying in a creek and land-locked. What defences her crew might have, I knew not; and though hoping for the sake of my men that these might not prove very formidable, still I never for an instant doubted that we should at once carry both them and her, and that in the rapid way in which I had so often seen matters of this sort carried before. The land immediately above this little creek rose high and mountainous and very steep, and just over the tiny masts of our chase we could distinguish the stately and antique form of a large ruin; its gray and mouldering pile, brightly catching in the sunbeams, that brought it clearly out from the blue distance of the hill behind, while its venerable remains vouched it to be almost as ancient as the rock on which it stood. But though part of this old stronghold still appeared to be inhabited, I nevertheless anticipated little or no opposition from such a quarter; the first lieutenant, who was to remain on board, promised to take care of this with the broadside of my little craft, and see that it was not allowed to annoy me. I gave him leave in such a case to approach within effective gun-shot, if possible, and then everything being in readiness, I at once shoved off.

The boat in which I led the way was a six-oared gig, steered by Joe Royal, and pulled by six as fine athletic fellows as I ever saw. My thoughts involuntarily reverted to the poor old admiral, as, turning round to take a last look at my little vessel, I reflected how completely I had owed my rise in the navy, and, indeed, almost everything I possessed, to his spontaneous kindness. My heart swelled both with gratitude and pride when, contemplating the fine boats' crews who followed me, I thought that I was now going to win that prize which he had once so naturally wished for life to hear of. Standing up in my boat, I took my hat off to my gallant fellows, and cheered them on;—three deafening shouts replied to my summons, and resuming my seat once more, we seemed to fly through the waters; in a few minutes the voices of those we had left behind in the Rapid came swelling over the waves, from the rigging they now manned in compliment to their

commander. The distance at which the sloop had been lying from the shore might have been a mile and a half; but a few minutes—with such hearts and hands—sufficed us to glide over this short space. Every moment that drew me nearer to the spot served to lift up my spirit, and with a thrill of joy I felt it rise within me and assert its dominion over the unnatural load that oppressed it. With an aim before me, I was once more myself, and, though my hand trembled as I drew my sword, and laid it in readiness on the seat beside me, it was solely with the intense excitement of playing for such a prize, and the consciousness that for the first time the whole and sole responsibility of the enterprise lay upon my shoulders. Still it was a glorious and exquisite feeling, which not even the thought of being, perhaps, presently mangled, could subdue; and when I thought that many men sought the gaming-table for a stimulus far inferior to this, the sincerest pity arose within my breast for those who could thus prostrate themselves to vice and ignominy, while their bosoms were glowing with the same fire that under better guidance would achieve advantage to their country, and honour to themselves!

“Royal, my old boy!—do you see the entrance of the creek?” I demanded, as we rapidly neared the land, and I searched for the point with my pocket-glass in vain.

“Ay, ay, your Honour, I see it all clear enough—I have it as extinct as possible, Captain Charles, and we’ll soon be in amongst them.”

“That’s right, my old fellow!—remember you the first of June?—Lay us but alongside, and I’ll make you prize-agent, you old dog, as surely as you ever donned a cross-belt!”

“Thank your Honour! thank ye! I’m main glad to see you have the heart to smile once more; but we should be spoonies, Captain Charles, if we hadn’t soul to crack a joke, and we to crack so many heads before long!”

“True, Joe, true!—As for you, my men, remember, you have nothing to do, but to drive the crew overboard—cut the cables, and loose every rag to the breeze!—The wind’s well off shore, and we’ll soon have her under the guns of the Rapid. Now, then, give way with a will!”

The men applying with fresh vigour to their oars, the light-boat trembled as she shot along the foam of the dark waters, already overshadowed by the high and abrupt land under which we now found ourselves. Many a rude and merry jest

was heard passing between the launch, the cutter, and the jolly-boat astern of us; emulating one another in the race, or quizzing those who fell gradually into the rear, while now and then was caught even a smothered witticism on the captain's gig, the light build of which ensured her keeping the lead, to say nothing of the dread person she contained.

Now is the time for our foes, if we have any, thought I, as we skirted the rugged heights that rose abruptly on our left, and seemed to frown us off, at the very moment that they lulled the water for our approach. "Huzza! there's the opening of the creek!" cried Joe, as we suddenly came abreast of a narrow clift in the steep rocks, which opened on a small harbour, surrounded on all sides by the same precipitous shores. "Huzza!" repeated the boats' crews behind us, dashing on in our wake. "Now, now, my men!—a few good strokes, and you're on board the prize!" said I, cheering on my crew—as, sweeping with vast velocity through the confined entrance that seemed almost too small to permit the play of our oars, I distinctly beheld the little vessel Joe sought moored broadside us, and, to my great joy, perceived that she was a schooner.

With cries and shouts of exultation, on we went, when just at the bottom of entering the strait I felt the boat graze over something beneath us, which I took for a sunken reef. A moment's agonizing pang came over me—but we glided safely on, and starting up, and seizing the naked weapon beside me, I called to the boats astern, "Rock!—beware!" and pointed downwards, while the boat shooting on across the narrow basin, I bade the men draw their cutlasses and pistols, and drop their oars, as the boats had way enough, while Royal, as before directed, steered right for the gangway.

At this instant, I heard a shriek, and something like a heavy plunge in the water behind us. Turning round, I beheld the shaggy boughs of some huge tree, springing up from the bottom, and barring all further advance through the little *goulet*, by which we had entered. On the other side of this fatal impediment, there I beheld my unhappy launch, which having suddenly dashed on this rude boom, broached broadside to, by the force of her own impetus, and upset!

"Courage! courage! my brave lads!" cried I, trying to cheer them up, though in agony myself at this sad accident.

“Lash the launch’s carronade to the boom with the boat-painter—fling it overboard, and try to sink it from before you!” I continued to the lieutenant in command; seeing at a glance the wily method by which this misfortune had been brought about. Hardly, however, had the words passed my lips,—when rap—rap—rap—came rattling down the musketry; its flashes issuing forth from every clift and cranny over head, and ploughing up the water in every direction around the devoted launch, to the aid of which the cutter and jolly-boat had now crowded. Some slight return to this fire was, it is true, attempted from our crew, but the points at which they were to aim were only indicated by the quick flashes that dealt death at every discharge, and left us, however severely suffering, still without a possibility of avenging ourselves on an enemy that was not even to be seen.

“Quick, for your lives!—on—on, my men!—board the schooner, and sweep her back to the assistance of the launch!” I cried in turn to my own crew, as I felt the boat’s bows run sharply alongside the gangway of the seemingly deserted schooner.

“Ay, ay, sir!” cheerily replied my gallant fellows, undismayed at the dangers gathering round them, and springing up to follow their commander, for whom they opened a passage to lead the way. Scarcely had I put a foot upon the schooner’s side, when forth flashed a blaze of musketry from the rocks just overhead, to be, alas! too quickly followed by a few smothered groans from the boat’s crew. Casting a glance behind me, as I still continued scrambling up the vessel’s bents, I beheld the bottom of my boat filled with the bodies of my gallant men—struck down and writhing in their last death agonies, when but a moment before they had been pressing on behind and around me full of life and vigour. One of the poor fellows, who had only been wounded, sprang up upon his knee, as if in answer to my look, but in another instant he gave a convulsive start and sank back a lifeless body upon the corse beneath him; while the gig, pierced with innumerable shot-holes, filled rapidly with water, and sank down to the gunwale’s edge. It was the destruction of an instant. Never in the sharpest of my service had I seen anything so terrifically sudden; and suffering ten thousand deaths from the thought that I was responsible for all this bloodshed, I cheered to old Joe,

now scrambling behind me; and burning with fury and despair, unable to find an object on which to vent itself, I sprang upwards once more.

“Beats the first of June, your Honour!” cried the old corporal at my heels. Scarcely could I say that my spring was made good; and indeed I was yet balancing myself in the very act of jumping on the deserted decks, when something appeared to drive my ears into my very brain. The decks beneath me burst asunder, flame and smoke seemed to encompass me around, and with an awful sound all sense or thought seemed hushed for ever. For a moment I felt as though tossed amid a world of waters, and then everything was calm and dark.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“It is a dream!” said I,—“yes, it can but be a dream! Surely I am awaking in the middle of the night, and must be at the ‘Folly!’ The horrid storming of Will’s cave has called up these dreadful images,—I am freed from the tortures of the doomed at last! Cornelia must be safe—safe in London!—Thank God that this is over! Had it endured much longer I must have awoke a maniac. I will get up and write to her, and then at least the idle phantasy of these horrid thoughts that haunt me will appear.”

Starting from the recumbent position in which I was lying, I attempted to gain my feet, but as instantly fell back. Merciful powers! If I could believe my own senses, I was chained hand and foot, and lying on the damp and loathsome floor of a dungeon! For some moments I remained still. I tried once more to welcome to my bosom the fond but false illusion that had for a moment proved so blessed. But, alas, it was in vain! I felt the manacles upon my hands—the fetters on my feet—while far away and above me to the left, I saw a faint dim light with something intervening, which fancy coined at once into the grated iron that now barred me from the freedom and the light of heaven. Torrents of rain seemed to be falling, and every now and then a sudden gust of the high wind that roared without shook the very walls of my prison. A sudden

flash of lightning hissed across the sky. It had, then, been no dream of fancy! There were, indeed, the bars of which I speak, and I was now a hopeless captive! The dim gloom thrown in upon me served only to show the dark extent of my prison, but failed to discover the walls that bound it in; saving that it half revealed to view the rude and blackened stones forming its roof, on a level with which was the loop-hole I mention. The quick and stunning thunder rolled fearfully along,—but, alas, it failed to shake down the pile above my head, and bury in its ruins one who was now tempted to curse the fate that ruled him.

Falling back, I groaned aloud! Fancy my horror, when I heard the groan returned from a distance, in tones that forbade me to imagine it was only an echo of the dreadful spot. "Who goes there? Who are you?" I demanded.

"Why, Bo!" answered a sorrowful and lachrymose voice, that made my heart leap with joy as I heard it—"I was once Corporal Joe Royal!—and though I say it, who shouldn't say it, there was ne'er—that is, for a foremost man—there was ne'er a readier letter writer in the fleet; the like o' which, d've see, and some little kindness in the way o' recommendation, got me the berth of secretary to Admiral Philip Fluke that was;—now dead and gone like myself!—though I do hope the good old officer isn't cruising about in these terrible latitudes; yet, if by any mistake he should happen to be within a day's sail, I don't doubt being pretty well cared for—however little, d've see, I may deserve it. As for me, whether I'm to be Old Nick's mate, or only his loblolly boy, I can't make out for the life of me; though it doesn't much seem to signify either, for the matter o' that; only having been bred up all my life to do my duty in a soldier-like manner, a fellow would wish to know his station in the quarter-bill—though he has got rather out of his reckoning; for it doesn't take much to content Joe Royal, so long as I have fair play, that's all, only I'm terribly vexed that I had not made my will! 'Twas main stupid of me. However, this is all I know about myself, ye see; so now, mate, who may you be, eh?"

Agonized as I had been but a moment before, the joy of finding that old Joe survived the wreck, and was still my companion, so changed the tenor of my thoughts, that I could not refrain from smiling at intervals, at the extravagance which

seemed to have taken possession of the old fellow's brain ; since he evidently fancied himself in the dominions of the arch enemy of man.

"Who am I, Joe ? is it possible you don't know my voice?" I demanded in turn.

"Lor, lor, Captain Charles !" whined the corporal. "Haven't you done no better than to come here ? who'd a' thought to see *you* here too ? Oh, but this is a worse go than I thought for ! I always hoped, Master Charles, that you'd have got a better berth in the other place ; but anything's good enough, I suppose, for sailors and soldiers. I suppose we shall see your Honour's father here by and by ! You haven't happened to run against your Honour's uncle yet, have ye, sir ?"

"Joe!—Royal!—you silly old fellow, what are you dreaming of ? You're not content with imagining that you're gone to 'Old Nick,' as you call him, *yourself*, but you must think I'm to meet all my family in a similar predicament ! Don't you perceive that you and I are taken prisoners and confined ? Do manage to come to your senses ! Day, I suppose, must break soon, and then you'll see that I am right !"

Alas ! imagine to yourself how all my sufferings were redoubled, when, by the wild and incoherent reply which Royal now made, it became glaringly evident that he was mad. The sudden ray of hope, which had stolen in upon the darkness of my despair, now left the gloom ten thousand fold more deep ; and after in vain trying to bring the corporal to a proper cognizance of surrounding circumstances, and listening horror-struck to his ravings for an hour, I knelt down and prayed for instant death !

But this it seemed was not to be. Day slowly broke ; and each succeeding moment brought home with still more harrowing force the remembrance of each sad aggravation of my unhappy lot. Where now were all those gallant hearts that had so lately followed at my bidding ? When last I saw them, they were falling fast beneath the fire of foes whom they could not even see, much less escape. As for my ship, the gale still howling without must have long since driven her away to sea ; and now tossed in the midst of the Bay of Biscay, some passing thought might dwell for a moment on one they had so slightly known, and so quickly lost ; and my death undoubted, some overjoyed successor would in a few days assume my office, and I be one of those who——were !

CHAPTER XXIX.

BUT reflections such as these I have just mentioned formed—each and all—a paradise to one which every now and then would flash across my mind—much as I strove to banish it—Cornelia! The very name—the very thought was enough! A train of horrid associations came rushing on me. And what might be her fate?—and where and how sustained?—were the questions linked with all! A faint hope still lingered on my mind that the schooner was no other than the one we sought. What else would have tempted her crew to so desperate a defence? What else but some private motive could have led to the barbarous treatment experienced at their hands, by one who would else have been simply a prisoner of war; entitled to honourable treatment, at least, from his rank as an officer, if from no other motive. Something assured me that my suspicions on this head were not without grounds—and if I had no other consolation, I should, at least, enjoy the melancholy thought of dying near her!

The morning had now so far dawned that I could, with some little difficulty, descry a few of the objects in the dim gloom around me. The place in which we were confined seemed to be of vast extent; for all my efforts to trace out its boundaries were vain. As I had imagined, the roof was high and vaulted, and supported by numerous massive pillars, whose rude antiquity was visible at a glance. Scarcely one of these square heavy props was to be seen without its bearing the remains of iron chains and rings, originally morticed into the stone-work, and now cankered, in many places, to the thinness of a thread by age.

About noon poor Royal awoke once more from his feverish slumbers! Hitherto, he appeared to have fancied himself merely a denizen of some world of torture—now the raging fever, under which he laboured, added to the excessive thirst by which he was consumed, made him burst out into all the heart-wringing exclamations of one expiring at the stake.—“Water! water!” was the incessant word upon his burning lips, mingled every few minutes with calls of reproach on one

who would willingly have given him to drink of his own heart's blood, if that could have prolonged a life so loved and valued! By degrees this shocking paroxysm seemed to wear itself out. The reverberating echoes of the frightful vaults returned a fainter and fainter sound to his still constant cries, until they sunk down into a low, hoarse, gasping murmur, that bespoke his sufferings near a close.

Denied even to catch the glazing look of his expiring eye, and thus assure his parting spirit that my heart was with him to the last, I sat down, after wearying myself in vain to break the bonds by which I was so inexorably bound;—my head bent upon my knees, and my tortured spirit hovering on the confines of consciousness and insanity.

A sudden noise, together with the darkening of our scanty light, startled me back again to life. Looking up towards the grated loophole, I beheld some long object thrust in. Slowly gliding down the embrasure-like opening of the thick wall, it fell to the ground. “Stay—stay!” I cried, dragging myself to the spot as quickly as my fetters would permit; “my servant is dying of his wounds and his thirst! Send us a surgeon, for the love of mercy!” Exerting myself to the utmost, I called and screamed until no voice was left me; but although I spoke in the best Spanish I could muster, nothing but the echoing vault replied.

Looking towards the supplies that had been thus thrown in, I found them to consist of a loaf of bread and one of the leathern wine-skins of the country filled with liquid. My thankfulness for this relief was indeed unspeakable! On loosing the mouth of the skin, however, I found that it contained not wine, as I had at first foolishly hoped, but water; and when I thought of Royal's fevered thirst, I rejoiced that I had been thus mistaken. A few moments, however, brought back almost all my former despondency, with—if possible—a still heavier load.

Relief had come too late!—Instead of making the slightest reply to my entreaties that he would rouse himself to take some refreshment, the corporal lay still and unmoved, and only betrayed his existence by the quick and stertorous breathing that heaved his fevered breast! In vain I implored him—in vain I tried again and again to break my fetters, and thus get near enough to pour some water down his throat. Worn out in strength, and with breaking heart, I gave up the attempt,

and, as a last resource, crawled out once more to the end of my chain, and breaking the bread in pieces, I sopped these thoroughly in the water, thus making them act on the principle of sponge. These I did my best to toss into the distracted lips that had gaped so long in vain; but not one in ten of my efforts was successful, and the twilight, deepening into night, forced me to renounce even this fragile hope, and abandon myself, an unresisting victim, to despair!

Taking a long draught, I laid down, utterly indifferent to what came next: now and then I tried to support myself by thinking how firmly others of my name had borne the afflictions that had been allotted to them.

Sleep gradually stole upon me, and the light, when it once more pervaded the dim vault, announced that the waking of day from without had long preceded mine within. My first thought was to renew, in behalf of Royal, those efforts which a failure of light had terminated on the preceding evening.

Crawling to my chain's-end, I gazed long and ardently at the poor old corporal's face. Sunk, pallid, and motionless—not a line was there but spoke of the past, and that alone;—his bosom no longer labouring with the breath of life, its mystic fire no longer 'lightening in his eye!' My darkest fears seem realised, and my captivity was no longer even shared!

Falling involuntarily on my face, everything passed away from before it. But the scene had not closed! Too quickly was consciousness restored, and involuntarily—for I scarcely knew what I did—the fruitless task of sopping the bread in water was resumed. After a few minutes, however, the mockery of my efforts came upon me with fresh bitterness, and dashing myself upon the stone, I gave way to all the grief oppressing me. This wild burst of rage passed off—tears came to my relief, and folding my arms upon my bosom, and propping my back against the wall, the day slipped by in the same awful calm—my wretchedness more mute, but yet more overwhelming than that of even the preceding day.

Once more the sun glimmered on the arched roof of my prison—once more its gold deepened to vermillion, and that fading, I again knew that another day was gone. Now, however, an apathy seemed to have fallen on my spirit, and anticipating the hour that should emancipate me from my misery, the thought crossed my mind as to whether the food, so use-

lessly supplied on the preceding evening, would be again thrown in.

A low sound, as of some human being at my elbow, suddenly caused my flesh to creep! Turning quickly to the point, a tall and indistinct figure stood before me, and between myself and the body of the poor corporal.

“Who are you?” I exclaimed as soon as I could command my tongue. The question was put in the language of the country, but a thrill of horror curdled my heart’s blood, when a voice but too familiar to my ear, demanded in return—“Do you not know me?”

A pause ensued. That voice—I certainly knew it, and yet what would I not have given to have been deceived! Again and again I taxed myself to reply, but my tongue seemed to revolt with the greatest loathing at the task. “When I see your countenance, I may answer you,” I returned, after a pause of some duration, and still involuntarily shuddering as I spoke.

“Look at my features then, and decide,” replied the stranger.

Suddenly turning upon his face the light of a dark lantern, which he had concealed about his person, I beheld,—monstrous as it seemed—the well-remembered countenance—of Kerslake!

“Now then, who am I?” he inquired with a sneer, as he marked the effect produced by his presence, and again closed the lantern.

“The worst and most desperate villain upon earth, Kerslake!” I replied, as the blood rushed boiling through my veins. “Your appearance unravels much that seemed mysterious, but everything is now plain. If it is by your agency that the poor fellow behind you has been murdered, you have only to ask your heart the question to have my words corroborated—to say nothing of the slaughter of my men and the detention of myself.”

“Ha—ha!—ha!—Most virtuous young man! Have you no more to say? Have you nothing further to urge against the once despised Kerslake?”

“Nothing. I perceive that my estimation of your atrocity has fallen short of the mark, rather than exceeded it. But it matters little; whatever your views may be, proceed to execute them—but spare me the disgust of your presence. I can only

attribute one purpose to your visit, therefore hasten to accomplish it. As you have the assassin's heart, do not lack his courage; summon that to your assistance, at least for once in your life. Is it the dagger or the bowl you have come to administer? If the former, you need fear no resistance: if the latter, you may spare yourself a superfluous task. The sight of such a fiend is a sufficient poison."

"Sufficient? no!" retorted Kerslake, trembling with passion as my reproaches stung him. "If you think it is the mere taking of your life will suffice for my revenge, you are mistaken. You shall have it. You shall bear it as a curse, too horrible for endurance, or be compelled to the alternative of ridding yourself of it with your own hand. Do not imagine that I come with an intention of terminating that which it is my only joy to behold—your utter ruin, and wretchedness, and despair. I warned you of this hour, but you smiled in your own security. The day was when I implored you; but now, though you could plead with the eloquence of an angel, it should not suffice to make me forget the words with which you then answered me, or induce me to abate one atom of the agony and degradation you shall undergo. You little know how completely you are in my power. I know you well—I know your character. I can value your affected coldness at its true worth—and even while you sit there in pretending unconcern, I am feasting on the anguish that is destroying you. I know you would sooner suffer your tongue to be plucked from its roots than utter the words; I know full well that your heart is breaking over the fate of one who is as fully in my power as yourself. Well may you tremble as I tell it you. Now where is your assumed composure? Let me mark it!" turning the full glare of the lamp once more upon my face. "Cornelia!—the beloved—the adored—the all-perfect Cornelia—is—is—mine! No hand to interpose between me and my prey. Think of that! Think of her fate, and now tax your abilities for a taunt as cool as the last."

"Speak on, sir!"

"Speak on! Yes, yes, I see your writhing, Arran, though you show it not. Your face is a most perfect piece of acting."

"Not so perfect as your own, Kerslake—it wants the villain's mark."

"But it shall not want it long, if I can help it! To give you *that*—to make you feel the hell that—"

"That you yourself experience."

"That I—that I? You have spoken truth! I care not if I own it! You and your minion robbed me of everything I had to lose—station—honour—peace of mind. Lowered in my own opinion, no standing in the eyes of others can ever make me happy. This you shall feel."

"When you regain your honour, it may be; but never, Kerslake, until then!"

Furiously grinding his teeth, and stamping on the ground, Kerslake turned away for a few minutes, as if the rage that boiled within him was too furious for expression! Coming back to his former position, but still cautiously without my reach, while the open lantern stood at his feet, he extended his arm in a threatening manner; and, trembling with the effort he made to command his passion, said in a low and hollow tone, "Arran, you have been the blight and mildew of my life—but hear this, and then let your boasted courage and philosophy support you if they can: Cornelia is mine—and you are in my power—those who surround me know no law but my will. I told you I would be revenged—I swore to keep my word. Since that hour, no other aim has shared my thoughts. A thousand projects have divided yours, but for this alone have I breathed and lived. My fortune, my comforts, my health—all have been bartered away to accomplish this object. It has been my dream by night—my plan by day. It has become the thirst of my existence!—and now it shall be quenched, even though it should be in your heart's blood!"

A horrid and unearthly rage seemed to take possession of the unhappy creature as he uttered these words, and for a few moments he gave way to his passion by stamping to and fro before me; then suddenly halting, as if a calmer moment succeeded, he went on: "There was a time—start at the word as you will—I say there was a time I could have *loved* you—but from the hour you refused my friendship!—no!—there are no words to paint the burning hatred that has consumed me! But I spare your life! Talk as you will, I know human nature too well to doubt that it is still dear to man under the most frightful circumstances: on these terms it is yours. Consent to sign that paper, and you are free!" As

Kerslake said this, he produced a scroll, and flinging it at my feet, turned the light towards me, that I might read it.

Folding my arms upon my breast, I looked stedfastly towards him with all the scorn I could express, and, remaining in utter silence, took no more notice of the paper at my side than if nothing had been there.

“Do you refuse to read it?” Kerslake demanded, in a voice of fury, after waiting for some moments. Without altering a muscle, or unfixing my look for a moment, I remained silent as before.

“This shall not avail you; persist in this obstinacy as you will, I have still a path to reach your heart. *Cornelia*, I tell you once more, is in my power. You cannot fancy half the horrors that she shall suffer if you persist in this conduct;—nor shall you console yourself by thinking, that the pangs you do not witness, you will be spared from sharing. No!—every agony that she endures shall be more than yours, for you shall witness it—the pang you cannot lessen—the cry for aid you cannot render—the violence you cannot avert.”—

“—Kerslake, are you a fiend? or are you a man? or is it simply that the form of the one conceals the heart of the other? Cease your revolting threats! When you can prove to me the truth of your assertions—when you can prove to me, even the possibility of your having gained possession of the lady to whom you allude—then your menaces may seem worth a hearing.”

“Do you cling to such an idle dream as that? But you must know its falsehood as completely as myself! If you recognise this letter, it will be sufficient,” tossing towards me one, which, with a shudder, I perceived to be the last I had written to *Cornelia*, entreating her to remain firm to her resolution of abiding by my advice, and promising that I would communicate these my wishes to her in a few days.

“So you know that for your own handwriting! Do you recognise this?” flinging another upon the ground. I took it up—but scarcely could I believe my eyesight, when a glance convinced me that it was a close forgery of my own hand, and so perfectly had the writing and the style been imitated, that for a few moments I doubted whether it was not my own. But, alas! the contents too soon convinced me on this point. It entreated poor *Cornelia* to join me on the instant at Ryde; it stated that a vessel had been procured to take us direct to Spain,

as soon as we should have been united—that urgent and imminent dangers were at hand, and this alone was the course by which they could be escaped: but that for particular reasons this could only be explained on meeting. Finally, Cornelia was charged to confide in no one but her French waiting-woman, and to place implicit reliance on the gentleman who brought her this letter as my particular friend, to whom I had confided the management of all the minor details of her escape. My heart seemed broken as I read this fatal document, and for some moments I turned it round—I gazed upon it with a vacant look of idiocy. By its date, it had evidently reached her at the very moment when she was expecting from me a letter to decide upon the steps she was to take. The mode of her abduction was now too evident.

“ You are convinced then ! ” said the fiend beside me, with a low laugh at the misery he witnessed. But I will be merciful, I will save you all doubt ! —all suspense ! The French attendant, the virtuous confidante of the chaste Cornelia, has been my devoted slave for months ! Gold, and that which sways a woman more—passion, these secured her to my purposes long since. By her kind means I knew of all your interviews, of every line you wrote. I was the friend so kindly recommended in the letter, and well you may be sure I bore out the praise bestowed. Sweet, simple, confiding youth ! these were the toils by which the inimitable idol has been snared. But for your own capture, you may thank yourself—that I could not well have effected, without your own aid ; though I foresaw how you would act, and hoped for the success that has attended me. I see you are satisfied of my truth ; but you shall be still more so. I have not been idle since last we parted. There was a humble enemy, that well deserved not to be forgotten at my hands. I told you I would return the dishonour heaped upon me by your satellite. But I forgot that you witnessed his end ! What a pity he cannot return you the compliment—ha, ha ! —Diego ! —” As Kerslake called, I heard approaching footsteps from the further end of the vault, and a Spanish servant stood beside the inhuman monster that had summoned him.

Having received his orders, the man disappeared, and Kerslake, pacing up and down, waited till the fellow should execute his commission. For me—whether I lived and breathed, or whether, as poor Royal had imagined, I really was in a place

of torment, I knew not—everything was in a state of chaos and confusion.

“Convince yourself!” said Kerslake, suddenly. I looked up—four rude wretches advanced bearing in their arms a female, over whose eyes a white scarf was now firmly bound. Having brought their fainting burden close beside me, a strong light was thrown upon her features, which wore the pallid hue of death. But, alas!—the fearfully quick throbbing of her heart bespoke this to be solely the result of fear.

A single glance at the never-to-be-forgotten features convinced me that I did indeed behold no other than Cornelia! Were I to live through an eternity of ages, the agony of that moment could never be effaced from the heart which it then seared for ever!

Oh, how I longed to fling myself upon that form and take one fond and final embrace!—to press at least her hand to my burning lips, and carry its refreshing coolness to my grave!—to speak—to say that I once more hovered near her, though no longer able to protect, and, in reply, to catch for the last time those accents on which I had so often hung delighted, as notes of the divinest harmony that had ever met my ear! But I restrained myself—she might still be ignorant of my torments; and the knowledge of my situation was a pang that I would have spared her, if possible.

Dearly, indeed, did the effort cost me! my rebellious heart seemed rising towards the beloved object that had so long guided its destinies, and formed its sole attraction! It seemed to burst within my bosom! The light of other worlds came flashing on me. I felt myself falling to the earth; and before a prayer could pass my lips, all sense had flown!—something like a shrill wild shriek seemed to linger for a moment on my ears, and the silence of death was around me. But it was not for long! I revived once more. Kerslake and myself were again left alone. “Now, then, you know my power!” said he, in accents of triumph and of joy, which I quite shuddered to hear.

“Kerslake,” said I, “whatever may be your power or your crimes, superior courage, it is well known, is not to be found in the catalogue. Whatever may be your purpose, proceed to its accomplishment—but in prudence to yourself, forbear to exult too highly: shoud I be tempted to wrench away these chains, the pollution of your touch will be but a poor safeguard

from perishing by my hands. Speak, then—what is it you require?"

"That you read that paper."

"Show me the light, then." My hand no longer trembled as I took up the scroll from beside me—I nerved my heart to meet with some unheard-of atrocity, and it was well I did so. The blood seemed frozen on my brain, as line after line revealed to me the diabolical design that had dictated such a document. It did not, however, occupy me long in perusing, and consisted of a letter addressed to *Cornelia*. This stated, at full length, the circumstances of my having been taken, and the fact of poor *Royal* having been purposely starved to death to aggravate my suffering. It then implored the poor girl to avert from my head the agony of a similar fate. But how, and by what means—scarcely can I even now bring my pen to trace the terms of such an offering! She herself was to be the victim—*Kerslake*, the revolting satyr to whom she was to be sacrificed!

For a few moments my heart failed me. Rather would I have suffered myself to be torn by wild horses limb from limb, than put my name to such an infamous proposal. But how to avert the danger suspended over *Cornelia*, when both were so completely in his power, I knew not. Hopeless as the project seemed, I determined to make the effort, for even in the most abandoned bosom some spot is still left accessible to the better influences of our nature.

"*Kerslake*," said I, "how have I deserved this at your hands? Can you tell me that you could once have regarded me with kindly feeling, and this at the very moment when you are heating red hot the dagger that is to be slaked in my bosom? What joy can you ever expect to know in life when your victims have passed away? Surely nature intended your breast to be the abode of something better than the demons of unbounded malice and revenge! Even granting for a moment that you have had cause for this rancorous—this refined and unheard-of persecution—even granting that you obtain the pleasure of seeing me expire amid torments hitherto too dreadful even for imagination, what peace can hereafter remain to you? I ask you to answer, for I see you are not so lost to the better feelings of our nature as to hear these truths unmoved."

But the only reply I received was by an abrupt wave of the

hand as he hurried to and fro; then stopping suddenly, for a moment his rapid stride was interrupted by a pause, and a strong effort to articulate—a hoarse, gasping, broken sound issued from his throat. Then, waving his hand once more, and bending his head on his bosom, and burying his face in his hands, he turned away. “Kerslake, Kerslake! there is a voice in your own heart which corroborates the truths which I affirm. Listen, I implore you, to its dictates. Never again may it be permitted to give you counsel, that cannot lead either to happiness or honour. Do not, for a brief and diabolical enjoyment, sacrifice a whole life to the bitter torments of a repentance unavoidable in its anguish and hopeless in its results! Turn, I implore you, Kerslake, to the better feelings of happier days. Spurn the despicable and inhuman gratification of an hour, and open out to yourself a path, by which not only to redeem the past with credit, but which will, with your means, enable you to reap from the future the blessings of those who will plead in your behalf, where the plea of none other will avail you. Do this, and I solemnly promise that no exertion of my friends—myself, or interest—shall be spared to restore you to the esteem of those from whom respect is most desirable!”

“Arran, Arran! These words—these words are—. Why did you not address me thus on that fatal morning when I called you out from the cabin? Why did your cold virtue and ill-concealed disdain poison my whole heart? poison my whole life with its pitiless unconcern? One half of what you have now said would then have saved me from myself. O God! O God! It is too bitter!”

The tears gushed in torrents from the unhappy man's eyes as he gave these accents utterance, with a cry that reached my heart. Then hiding his face still more completely from my view, he dashed himself to and fro before me. “But no, it is too late!” he continued in a few minutes, while his words seemed scarcely able to struggle from the heart that gave them utterance. “The flame of torment is already lit. Here within me are glowing embers. My heart has become a living coal. My thoughts are a consuming fire. My sleep is a state of torment. How can I forget that the blood of Watch and all who perished with him are on my hands? You do not know the fearful load of crime that is weighing me down—but how can I forget it? How can I forget that it was by

my means—my money—my influence, his life was taken—that it was by my intrigues his sister fell. This you do not know—but this is nevertheless the truth: I—I was the wretch. Every artifice of force and fraud, disguise and violence, lie at my door. My triumph was not complete until I knew that his last dying moments were to be embittered with the pangs of jealousy, of love, and the bitterness of a brother's shame. Can I remember this, and dream that I can yet be happy? No. It is too late—too late—too late! I spurn your offered friendship! I laugh to scorn your virtuous life—your honourable enjoyments, and live, I tell you, but to feast my eyes upon the agony you shall yet go through Read, read that paper! Here are the pens and ink. Everything is ready for your signature. Give me but that, and you are free! Wander where you will, I shall then have the joy of knowing there is one breast as degraded and tortured as my own! and that one, his who might have saved me from this ruin by a few kind words, that nothing but the cold unfeeling pride of virtue prevented him from giving. Sign, sign, I say, or you may fear all that I can wreak upon Cornelia—and more than twice the tortures by which this wretched dog has perished!"

As Kerslake delivered these last sentences, he wrought him up to a degree of fury that surpassed all bounds, and made me indeed think that he was not less possessed than he had said;—while a thrill of horror and of rage shot through me, as he finished his threats with an insulting kick on the body of poor Royal. Still I saw that there was yet one redeemable spot in his black heart; and the faint hope that this might yet avail to soften him, and sincere pity for his sufferings, and contrition for any coldness on my part, which might have led me to neglect the assistance of a fellow-creature; these motives combined to make me temporize with him to the last.

"Kerslake," said I, "for your own sake I implore you to be cool! Though your crimes be of the crimsoned hue of the blood that has stained them, you have yet room for hope—but this may be the last time you will find human voice to offer it to you. Do not spurn it now. Your life is yet long enough for pardon—your means, I repeat, are yet sufficiently ample for some atonement. But by the execution of your threat, you for ever consign yourself to the doom that you abhor. If, as you say, I might once have saved you, and neglected to do so;

believe me, at this moment, nothing grieves me more. It was an error of thoughtlessness, rather than premeditation, and sprang not from the impulses of the heart, but of the head—forgive it then as an earnest of your wish to be forgiven, and, since it was a fatal error, my atonement shall be the deepest I can make to you,—even though it may for ever wreck every hope that I hold dear! If I may judge from this paper, your affections are set upon the same object as my own. No fear of death or torture shall ever induce me to ask Cornelia to become yours, in order to save me; but if this measure can be the means of inducing you to forego your horrid thoughts of revenge, and restoring you to the pursuit of that honourable conduct to which you say I might once have led you, I solemnly promise you, before my God, that on your restoring Cornelia and myself to freedom, I will comply with the main spirit of this letter, and ask her to receive your addresses. I will pledge myself to be absent from her for a whole twelvemonth; and if, by that time, you can establish yourself in her affection—though, I repeat, that it would make me for ever wretched,—still you shall, as this paper purports, be at liberty to make her your wife."

" Ha ! ha ! away with your priest-like doctrines of virtue and repentance ! Do I not tell you it is too late ? The fire has fed upon me too long ! My life is cankered up !—Wife ! Ha ! ha ! What term is that for me ? Look at that paper once more—no such term is named, or even meant in it. I laugh at such a word—and trample on it, as I will upon your heart ! Do you think I ever contemplated the foolery of such a title or of such a tie ? Where would be the revenge of that ? No—she shall be mine—mine by your supplication. Your offers are idle. The moment is passed for ever!—no words shall scare me from my plan. *Request* ?—ay, you shall supplicate, offer as a boon—or before three days are passed, your eyes shall have witnessed all you dread, and ten times more, wreaked upon Cornelia's head, and you——"

" Cease your unmanly threats, unparalleled villain ! Nothing but the Pandemonium maddening in your heart could have prompted a proposal so abhorrent to human nature ! No bosom but yours could have fancied for a moment, that there exists another being in a human shape, who could be influenced by any one demoniacal feeling in common with yourself. Death must end the sufferings of both Cornelia and myself at last, let them

be of whatever bitterness or intensity they may! But hear me. Doomed as I am, and horrible as my fate is to be!—it is a death that shall be calm and mild to yours, though it overtake you on the couch of luxury and repose! The calm echo of my voice in this sad dungeon startles upon you, I perceive, even now; but remember it is a cold and fearful sound that will never leave you while life remains! It is thus I sign your abhorrent proposal!" tearing the paper in fragments and flinging it at his feet, "I do not curse—I have a deeper punishment to bestow—the bitter sight of witnessing the fortitude of a mind at quiet with itself. This is a joy you shall never know. Now, do your worst. You have my answer—nothing shall wring from me another word. Begone, sir! Your presence has power to taint even the gloom of a dungeon."

For a moment, Kerslake glared at me in silence. Then, as if cowed and staggered at my words, he turned round, paused—again turned, and departed.

CHAPTER XXX.

HE went, but scarcely did I know that I was left alone. The excitement of such an interview, added to my previous debility, was more than I could bear, and the gloom of the grave seemed already to have overshadowed me. Low footsteps, approaching from the direction in which Kerslake had disappeared, now aroused me. Without uttering a word, two men of disgusting and ferocious exterior laid down a basket containing some provisions and a bottle of wine, hung up a faint lamp that seemingly had but a short time to burn, and then, unchaining my legs from the ground, left me at liberty to walk.

Wonder so overcame my faculties at this unexpected proceeding, that I allowed the men to depart into the surrounding gloom before I could command a question: when at length I called, the echoes of the place alone replied to me. For a quarter of an hour I sat motionless, meditating on the probable cause of this unexpected change in the conduct pursued towards me. Hope, ever ready to colour objects with the false and gorgeous hues of her delusive prism, now whispered that Kerslake might be relenting, even at the eleventh hour;

while suspicion hinted, that some slow and cruel poison was disguised in the viands thus brought to tempt my fainting appetite.

But a variety of reasons made me discard both these ideas as false, and then I beheld the fact as it indeed stood—that Kerslake, fearful lest pitying nature should release one of his victims, had determined thus to secure the prolongation of that life, on the excruciating tortures of which he was now so fully determined. I will avail myself of his inhuman bounty at any rate, thought I, for Heaven alone is prescient of the issues of man's fate. Desperate as everything appears, it is my duty to confide, and struggle to the death. As my chains were now partly released, I even for an instant thought of an escape. But the very indulgence they had given me showed how slight the chance was of that.

The first use, however, that I made of my comparative freedom, was to approach the body of the once tender-hearted Joe Royal. As I knelt beside the poor old fellow, whom I may say I loved with all my soul, and took his cold, resistless hand in mine, my grief proved too powerful for control;—all we had together suffered—all his virtues, his foibles, and his faults—came rushing over me, and I burst into a flood of tears! Never, thought I, shall it be said—“by foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed!” Though unable to arrest your murder, this at least is a melancholy pleasure, which our assassins have unwittingly allowed.

Pulling some money from my pocket, for the purpose of weighing down the lids, I found that they were already closed. Struck by this circumstance, I gazed attentively upon the countenance, where loyalty and truth had once been written upon every feature, now disfigured with blood! Cold as the surface was, I could not persuade myself that some slight degree of warmth did not issue from the mouth. My heart throbbed violently at the hope thus awakened, and, thrusting my hand into his bosom, these hopes were, if anything, confirmed.

Pouring some wine down the poor old corporal's throat without further delay, I began to chafe the region of the heart, until the revival of some faint pulsation and the exhaustion of my own strength made me pause. I then took a draught myself, together with some other refreshment, and, unhangng the lan p, began to search the vault for a chance of escape. This

was, however, fruitless—I soon found the door of access firmly fastened from without, and came to two of the boundary walls. Towards the end of the dungeon, the stones that paved it had been broken up in heaps; and the ground being full of pits of various inequalities, I more than once narrowly escaped the extinction of my flickering light; and, finding great difficulty in retracing my way back to Royal, determined to abandon all prospect of flight. The corporal it was utterly impossible could accompany me; and to leave him, now that there was the slightest hope of his life, was a thing not to be contemplated.

My strength being renewed by the wine, I resumed my task at intervals, and towards morning, though nothing like sensibility had returned, there was still enough of life distinctly perceptible in the corporal's bosom, to make mine throb with a livelier pulse than I ever thought it would have known again.

Well, indeed, was it that there was some merciful counter-balance to the furies that desolated my bosom through that tremendous night! I had now had too deep and horrible an experience of all that Kerslake would do, to accomplish his ends; and that these would be carried by any means, I could no longer doubt.

Tossed by the wild tempest of my passions, reason seemed on the very point of being overwhelmed—and, kneeling alternately by Royal's side, and chafing his breast, and dropping the wine into his mouth in despite of the darkness,—then pacing up and down the dungeon—now addressing myself incoherently to Heaven, and now calling on Cornelia—that awful night passed on, in storm and fury it would be vain to paint!

Soon after dawn I seated myself once more by the corporal, and renewed those efforts which had at length brought on the slightest perceptible respiration. Exhausted at length by the terrific conflict of my emotions, I fell into an uneasy slumber. This, however, was of far greater length than I had imagined, for day was evidently far advanced when I awoke. The sudden jar of a bolt aroused me, and, springing to my feet, I observed three Spaniards advancing. Two of them I had seen before, and they were all well armed.

“What do you want?” said I, clasping my hands together, so that the chain, which was still secured from wrist to wrist, would serve, if necessary, for some slight defence.

"We want nothing but yourself," answered the men, "and you must come with us."

"For what purpose?"

"How should we know?" was the reply.

Shall I sell my life as dearly as I can at once, or obey the summons? was the question that flashed upon my mind; but a moment's reflection determined me to go. For whatever purpose I was required, Hope had not yet deserted me, and the final alternative of which I had for a moment thought, was not too late at any time. Snatching up the wine-skin from beside me, I took a long draught, as the only weapon with which I could arm myself, and then, telling my conductors to move on, I followed.

Of Royal I was happy to see that my jailors took no notice, concluding, and of course very naturally, that he remained in the state in which they believed they had left him—that of death. Nor indeed was he even now far removed from it, and could only by the closest scrutiny have been found to be within the recall of our atrocious persecutors.

Having ascended a considerable distance, by many steps, and passed through a large court, together with several chambers, all partly in ruins, and some with nothing but their bare walls spared from the ruthless hand of the great destroyer, I at once perceived that the conjectures I had formed, as to the site of my prison, had been correct; and that Royal and myself had indeed been confined in the dungeons of that gloomy pile, which I had first observed from the deck of the Rapid, on the fatal day of the attempted cutting-out! In another moment we passed by a ruined window, which gave me a full view of the noble element with which all my dearest aspirations had been associated!

A few more steps conducted us into a lofty gallery, which communicated with another part of the building. Here the progress of decay seemed rather to have been resisted than arrested, while the gloomy magnificence of proportion so visible in the halls through which we passed, served to recall the departed grandeur of other days, and struck a chill upon my anxious heart which was hardly needed. My conductors now suddenly paused before some high massive doors, and, after a few words in a low whisper and a slight tap, these last were thrown open with a motion for me to advance.

The interior thus displayed, was a chamber considerably

more large and lofty than anything which we had passed. Around me at the lower end stood ten or a dozen men, dressed and armed, in a manner very similar to those who had led me from my late prison, and evidently of the same nation. The light was admitted through several high gothic windows, one of which, however, at the higher end of the hall, on the left side, seemed to have been recently shattered by a stroke of lightning, since it was entirely demolished, and the fragments of its heavy masonry, which had been rent down to the ground, lay scattered at its base in confusion. Here the sun came shining in, and spoke all cheerily of the glorious scene without, while the fresh breeze stole through and played like the breath of heaven on features that had too long pined beneath the want of light and air.

That the crisis of my fate seemed to have arrived, I at once gathered from the mock solemnity visible in the gathering of the rude retainers near the doors, and the arrangement of one or two other objects around me. At the head of the hall my fevered eyes descried the execrable being whose work this was, seated in a faded chair of state, placed on a sort of dais, beneath which, and supported by a group of women—who seemed scarcely able to prevent her falling—stood one whom my heart instinctively announced by its emotion, to be—Cornelia!

For a moment, surrounding images swam dizzily before me—but passing my hand before my eyes, and assuming a composure that I did not feel, I gathered up my chains, to prevent their jarring on the ear I loved; then, with as firm a step as I could command, I advanced up the hall. Having arrived opposite to her on whom every thought was now fixed, I paused, and turned towards her.

Pale and fearfully wan, and emaciated to a degree that made my heart bleed to look at her, she too seemed to gather fresh courage from this dreadful meeting; and motioning to her attendant as if she would stand alone, she returned my gaze with one of the utmost tenderness and truth.

I did not deny myself the ecstasy of this mute communion, during a few brief seconds; but, fearful lest the spell of that soft eye should undo all the resolutions of my reason, I voluntarily moved on a step, and, fixing my eye on Kerslake, demanded, with as calm a voice as I could maintain, what it was he might require from my presence.

“Your thanks,” he replied, in tones which did not even attempt the concealment of their triumph—“simply your thanks to the lady on your left. Though your honourable virtue,”—with a sneer,—“would not permit you to ask her for your freedom on the terms I generously offered to you last night, she has, notwithstanding, taken compassion upon you, and voluntarily entered into the agreement that you refused.”

My brain whirled round! For a moment I contemplated rushing on the wretch who dared to utter such a sentence, and venturing everything on the struggle. I could not believe the falsehood, and looked towards its victim to appeal to her for the truth. My tongue had, however, barely pronounced the word—“Cornelia,”—when all further utterance was chained. I seemed to have grown to the spot on which I stood!—Waving her hand with the divine and thrilling bearing of one who soared far beyond the feelings of this mere world, and no longer weak and trembling, the lovely victim advanced into the midst of the hall.

“Charles, it is too true! Since the sacrifice was to be made, I have determined on it—” “Cornelia, I implore you—” “Nay, grant me this last favour—I only ask a hearing—. I say I am ready for the sacrifice, but only”—turning to Kerslake—“upon the conditions named. Promise to him his freedom, and unchain him.” Kerslake hesitated for a moment, then, drawing his sword with all the conscious insecurity of a coward and a villain, he directed his creatures to knock off the irons from my wrists, which they did.

“Now, then, swear to observe your promises inviolate,” said Cornelia, addressing the Spaniards—“swear that your late prisoner shall depart safe as he came.”

“I do swear,” said Kerslake. “*You?*” interrupted Cornelia, with a look of ineffable scorn; “do you think the oath of such a heart as yours will be accepted either in heaven or on earth? No, my brave men, it is to you I address myself—swear to your unfortunate country-woman that your master shall observe his pledges, and receive for this service the only gift that her misfortunes have left it in her power to bestow”—taking off a diamond bracelet from her arm, and placing it in their hands.

“Away with this!” cried Kerslake, rushing forward.—“Swear, my countrymen—swear it, I beseech you, for the love of the Blessed Virgin!” repeated Cornelia, drawing

back for shelter behind the rude men who thronged around her.

“We will! we will!” shouted several of the fellows, deeply affected at the distress they witnessed, while their lowering visages were fiercely turned on Kerslake, who had thought to deprive them of their proffered reward.

Cornelia waved him back, and he stood still; then approaching me, she laid upon my shoulder a light hand, that thrilled to my heart’s core. Still I moved not—my form seemed chilled to stone, and my arms to have become part of the breast on which they were now folded! My eyes, distended, were fixed upon the lovely face so softly looking up to mine—but no tears came to relieve the burning eye-balls, which felt as though they seared the brain to which the sense of seeing was conveyed!

“Charles!” said Cornelia, in a voice where reproach was slightly mingled with the anguish of the moment. But she could say no more. A struggling sigh filled up the rest! and, flinging her arms wildly round my neck, she burst into tears, and there for a moment hung like an infant! Horror and surprise had chained my faculties. I would have spoken, but no sound issued from the lips that moved in mockery to my will!—Pressing them for an instant on her cold forehead—remembrance seemed to rally and point out the arrival of the moment when alone I could expect to fall with honour! Another moment’s happiness, thought I, and then to die at bay!

Suddenly lifting her face from its distracted pillow, Cornelia’s eyes seemed to say—“I thank you for the love you have returned me to the last!”—then, dashing away the last tear that lingered on the silken lashes, her countenance assumed a look of high and resolved agony, and drawing back her head, and no longer agitated, she put aside the flowing hair that intercepted her view of Kerslake. Looking stedfastly at him, and raising her hand, as I thought, to heaven, she said, “I fulfil my promise—the casket may be yours, but the jewel it contains shall never be polluted!”

Something gleamed in her grasp as her arm descended with rapidity and vehemence on her own bosom; and, in the next instant, the ruddy current of her life came bubbling up into the breast, to preserve which it had been shed!

“Fly, love!—Fly!”—her dying lips feebly whispered, and,

with a motion to place it in my hand, she attempted to lift from its sheath the dagger dripping with her blood! Trembling as I removed the fatal instrument, I bent over the dear victim to catch the parting spirit!

A tremor crept over those limbs of exquisite symmetry and beauty—the mute soul gradually fled those orbs of light—her lips moved gently for a second, and the beautiful and heavenly guest seemed reluctantly to soar from that fair tenement its presence had adorned!

With a shriek of terror her women rushed to her assistance, while the rude and desperate men, who but a moment before had been so touched with her beauty and her grief, stood horror-stricken and motionless. The dagger she had given me remained grasped in my hand—now nerved with superhuman strength and fury. Resigning the slaughtered and beloved *Cornelia* into the hands of her women, my eyes, uncounseled, turned on *Kerslake*: speechless and aghast, and trembling, he remained with his sword pointed in an attitude of defence towards me:—one glance seemed to have transfixed him to the spot.

Not long did he remain in doubt of my intentions.—One spring took me clearly past the few who stood between the tyrant and the avenger, and the dagger, rendered sacred by the death stroke of his victim's heart, promised to be speedily polluted in his own!

Without waiting for my nearer approach, or being able to utter even a cry for help to those who seemed but little inclined to render it, he turned at once, and for safety addressed himself to flight.

His first thought was to gain the door, and find security, or at least assistance, among the number of his retainers. But between him and them there gleamed the crimsoned poniard of *Cornelia*—there stood the form of one who was no longer chained. It was but the pause of an instant—dashing towards the broken windows, he leapt out, and was in a second followed by myself.

On he flew, along a ruined terrace that overlooked the sea, and which, fortunately, was at no part sufficiently low to be leaped without destruction. In the extremity of his danger, *Kerslake* now fled for refuge to the left, where the end of the walk had formerly rested on a neck of land, so narrow, that

none but those possessed of the surest foot and eye could attempt to tread it. This neck of land terminated in a little craggy knoll, on which there was barely room sufficient for one man to lie down ; and which apparently in other days had been used for a signal-post, from its great height above the sea ; to which, at a frightful distance below, it descended by what was almost a sheer precipice.

Both the neck of land and the little knoll to which it led seemed to have borne no human foot for countless years, for the wild saltwort was growing freshly on every part, and rather added to, than diminished from, the slippery nature of the path. A single glance convinced me that the slightest stumble was sure destruction in the black gulf which calmly slept below ; and where, indeed, but a few days since, had been lying the fatal schooner.

To this precarious hold, then, Kerslake fled, as the only spot which held out the briefest hope of escaping the justice that he had indeed cause to dread !—Hither, with all the confidence a good cause inspires, I now rushed after the atrocious criminal.—Pausing for an instant to watch whether he should safely pass the narrow ledge, I no sooner saw that chance refused to bear the stain of such an execution, than I leaped forward, and succeeded in gaining the knoll already mentioned, just as he faced about to dispute my passage with his sword.

Catching this weapon upon my dagger, at the first lunge, I slipped my hand up to the hilt, and, entangling the last with the point of my poniard, put in practice an Italian feint ; then, wrenching the rapier from my adversary's tren.b'ing hand, I made it glitter aloft for a moment in his eyes, and then his last sole hope fell swiftly down into the abyss beneath. Scoring to stain my hand with stabbing even such an opponent, I was about to send my poniard after it. Remembering, however, whose was the sacred blood upon its edge, I dropped it gently on the ground, placing my foot upon it, to prevent its coming into Kerslake's hands.

Without removing my eye for a single moment from his face, I now, in open preparation of the deadly struggle about to ensue, stretched out those arms, that his chains had so lately and so relentlessly bound in iron.—A shriek of piercing agony, and a cry for help, burst from his blanched lips, as he wit-

nessed this fearful demonstration of the foe, opposed to whom he now stood, almost touching breast to breast.

The sound of voices from behind already warned me, that if I wished my revolting task not to be interrupted, it should no longer be delayed. Fastening one hand, therefore, with an iron gripe upon either of the wretched man's shoulders, the fatal struggle began.

For the first few seconds it was an equal match; the overstrained and nervous energy of despair was opposed to the determined purpose of exterminating justice: after variously shifting our positions for some moments, and the advantage alternating now on this side, and now on the other, I suddenly stooped on one knee, and Kerslake stumbled over me. Seizing him by the neck and arm, I exerted all my strength to hurl him directly over the circumscribed boundary: but from the circumstance of his being uppermost, together with his having set his foot upon a projecting stone, I not only was unable to succeed in my attempt, but was prevented from regaining my position, without getting myself into one of considerable danger.

For a moment the scales hung balanced rather against me, as on the very brink of the awful precipice I had to resist all his force; now impelled with the additional stimulus of the new hope that flushed his pallid cheeks, and backed by the fulcrum which his foot had gained.—Making a tremendous exertion, and shifting my right hand slightly, so as to gain a more effective position on his neck, I strained every muscle, and suddenly swayed him round, so as to detach him from his strong point;—quickly letting go my late hold—I now seized him in both arms round the waist—lifted him bodily off his legs, and whirling my burden outwards, fell flat upon the ground.

By means of this stratagem, Kerslake now hung over the terrific steep, suspended only by the grasp which he still maintained upon my collar; while I, lying on my face upon the little eminence, was only prevented from being dragged over the one side, by the hold which I kept with my feet on the other. I soon felt, however, that this could not long endure, for what with his pendant weight and the struggle of his legs, which vainly endeavoured to find some footing, I was now gradually inch by inch slipping down, after him, whose de-

struction seemed so certain!—My hands being at liberty, I instinctively used my right to strengthen my precarious hold, while firmly fastening the other on Kerslake's neck, I endeavoured to make him let go his desperate grasp. This, however, he seemed determined to prolong to the last, hoping that as he was not to be saved himself, he might entail a similar death on me: gradually, however, as the grip upon his throat produced its suffocating effects, his hold began to relax, and slipping his grasp from my collar to my arm, his breathing once more became free. At length, however, having slid his hold down to my hands, it was by these alone that he hung suspended over the dreadful gulph beneath, no other part of his person being of course within reach.

In the meanwhile the longer lever thus brought to bear upon his antagonist, greatly accelerated my motion across the rock, until my head being over the first rugged edge of the precipice, I was compelled to look directly down the frightful dizzy height, or rest my eye on a still more horrible object—the death-stricken countenance of Kerslake. His mouth distended to give utterance to vain cries for help—his eyes starting from their sockets, and his forehead splashed by my blood, which, oozing from a slight wound in the neck, fell drop by drop direct upon him. As the issue of this horrible contest now depended not upon the exertion of my strength, but the exhaustion of his—I could only mutter a silent prayer to Heaven, and endeavour to turn my eye towards the horrified servants, who with the inanimate looks of statues rather than men, witnessed the issue of the catastrophe, afraid to venture across the narrow neck that divided us, and deterred either by motives of mercy or the remembrance of their oath, from sending a pistol ball through my head, and thus terminating both lives together.

Still with every second the weight pulling at my hand of course increased, and, with a freezing emotion of horror, I felt myself slipping over the ground more and more rapidly. Silently giving up myself for lost, I commended my soul to the mercy of its Maker, when another inequality gave my feet a firmer hold, and I felt the grasp of Kerslake gradually relax. Involuntarily turning my eye towards the wretched man, with a revulsion of feeling that can never be described, I suddenly

felt my hand freed from his, and as suddenly beheld him **sink** into the profound and awful depth beneath !

Down he went—the mangled and lacerated body, rolling, and tumbling over and over, among the low shrubs and weeds, and leaping from point to pinnacle of the rugged rocks, until it arrived half way down ; when the precipice suddenly shelving in, the disfigured corpse swiftly disappeared, with a sullen plunge, into the dark flood beneath.

How I regained my safety I know not ; but, having managed to drag myself from my dangerous position, I offered up a prayer of deep thanksgiving for the mercy that had spared me from so dreadful an end, and, taking up the dagger, re-crossed the narrow pass. Finding that not the least opposition was made to my progress, nor any resentment shown at the death of Kerslake, I put up to dry in my bosom the sad weapon that had been wet in Cornelia's, and then retraced my way to the hall.

But it was indeed the casket bereft of its most precious jewel, which I now pressed to my lips !—Looking up from those still lovely lineaments, to motion the surrounding females to bear away their fair and unhappy mistress from the shocking scene in which she lay—my eyes suddenly rested on a face that I had known. Another glance—Alas ! that I should record the words !—it was no other than Fanny Watch !

The guilt of him so lately despatched to his final doom had not fallen short then of his boast ! Kerslake, and not Gresham, then, was the guilty abductor. Yet who, at the time, would have believed that so many circumstances could have combined to wrong the latter ?—Alas for the former !—ruin and contamination seemed quickened into life, wherever he appeared ! The poor girl uttered an exclamation of surprise and anguish as her glance caught mine. A faint colour crimsoned on her cheek, to fade as quickly as it came, and, falling at my feet, she swooned.

Pointing to those who bore away Cornelia, to lift her too, I sank trembling on the spot that had so lately witnessed my last and deepest bereavement ! With the indifference of a maniac, rather than the calmness of a man, my thoughts ran over the crowded events of the last few days ! “Where now were those I had so loved ? One by one they had vanished from my side, and I stood in the world—as I sat in that vast and

blood-stained hall—alone!—Where now were all the dreams
my boyhood loved to nurse?—Where were the warm affections
of my heart, for which alone I had ever wished to live?—What to
me was the chance and prospect of distinction, when no loved
lip was left to praise?—My hopes—my fears—my wishes—
where now were they?—or what remained before me but the
grave?
" "

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